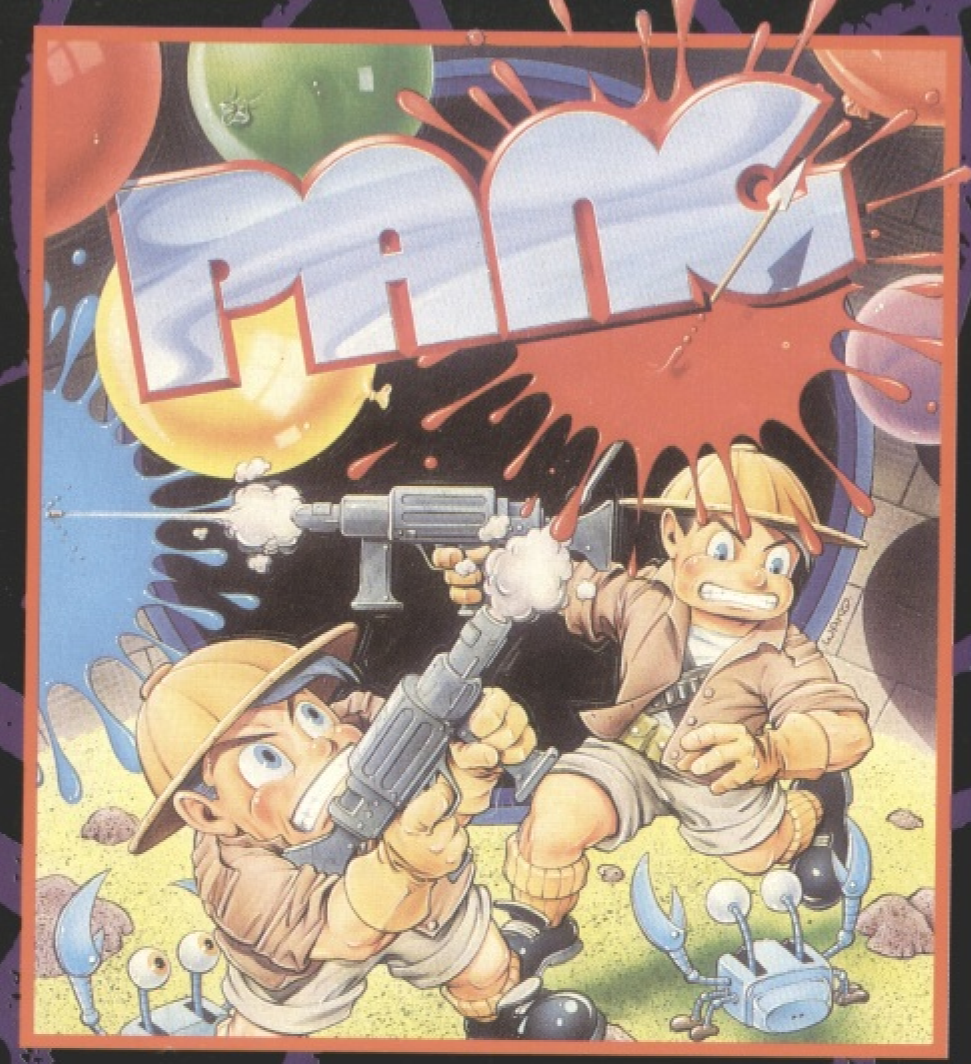
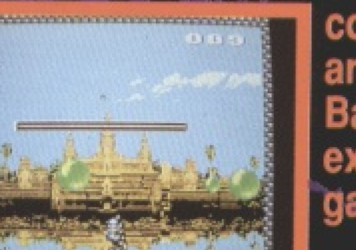

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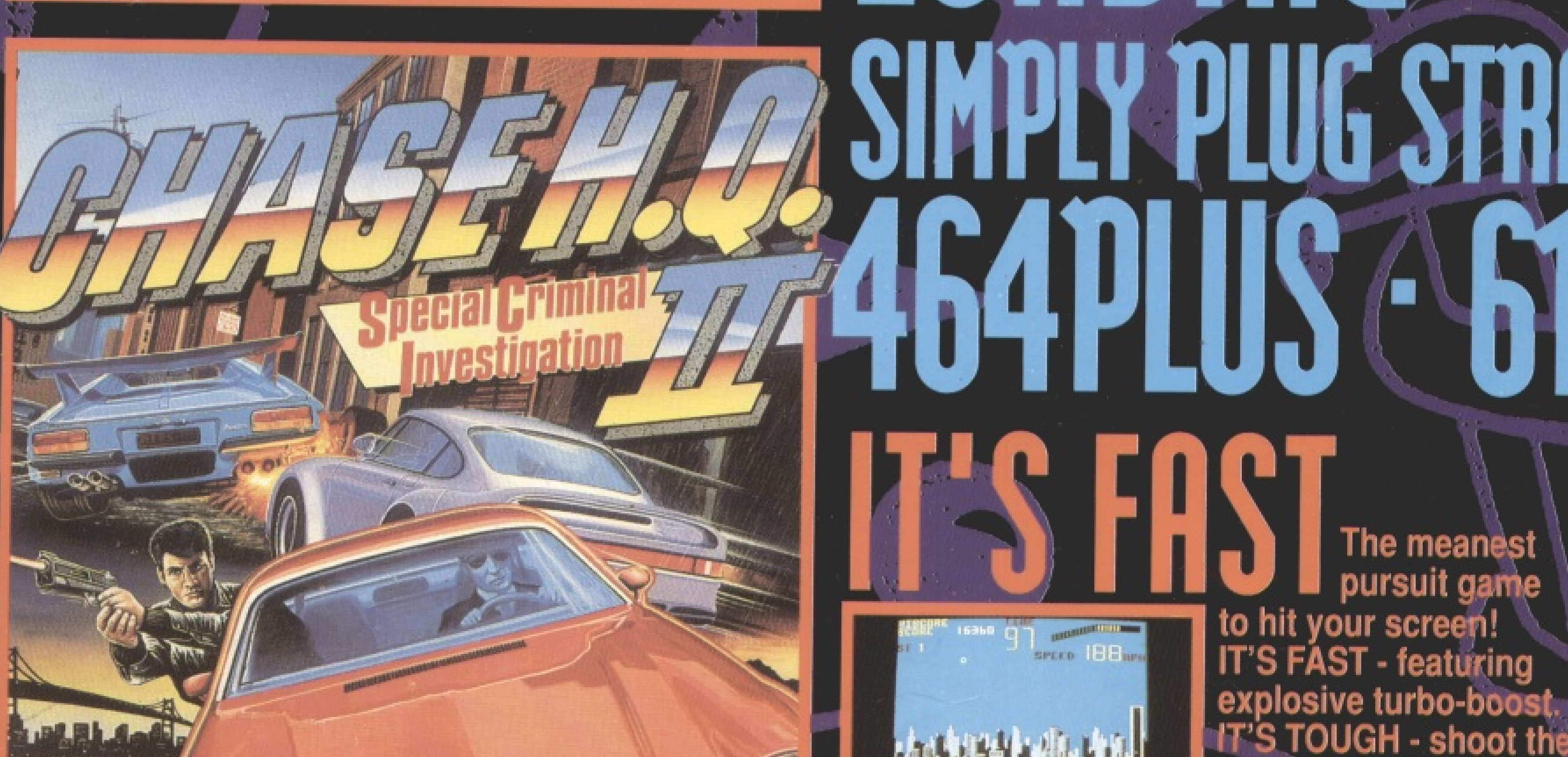


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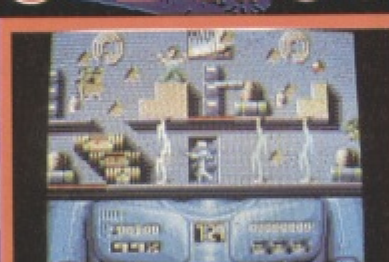
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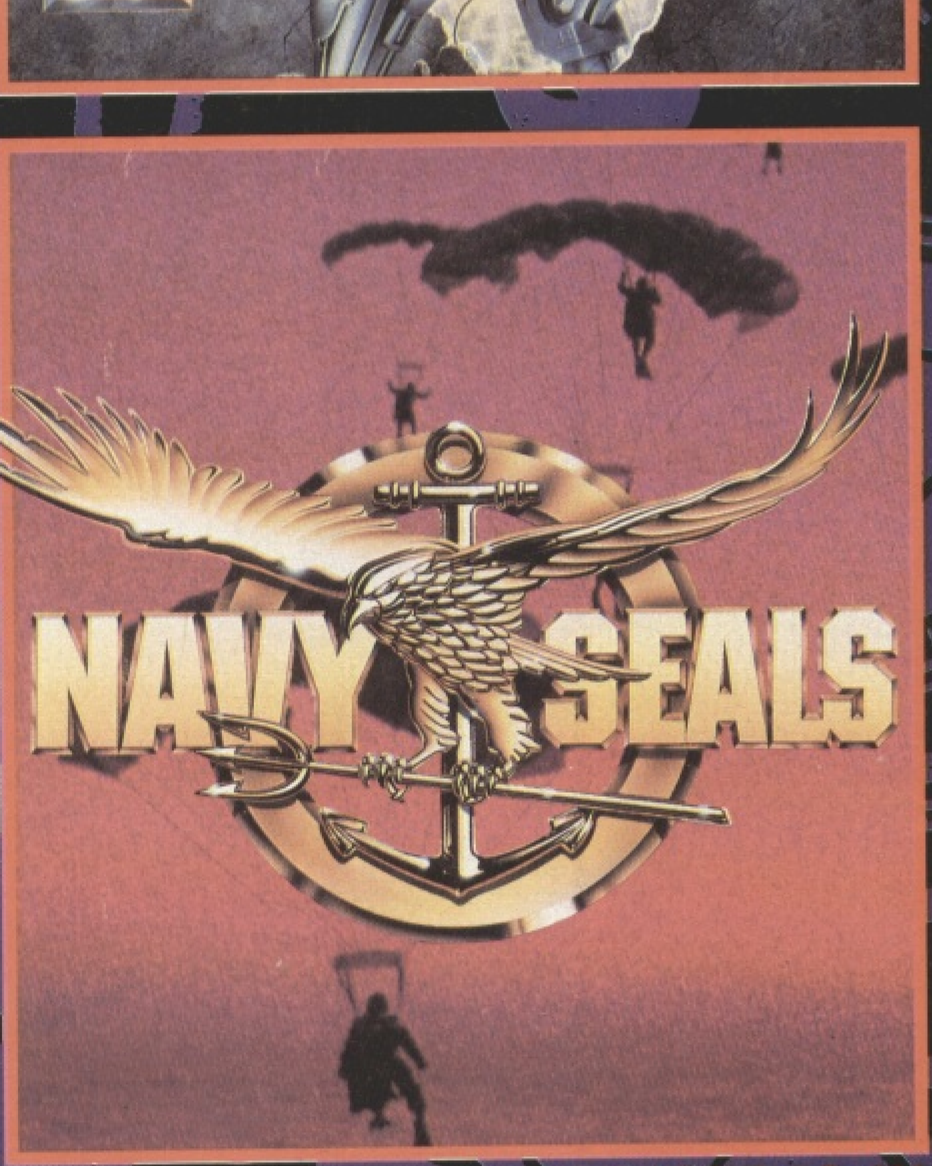
ENHANCED GAME-PLAY

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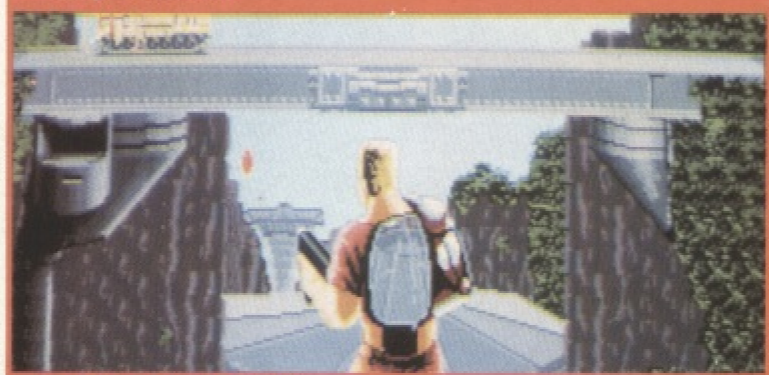


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CONTE

MEAN MACHINES DECEMBER I

PREVIEWS



COMPO

NTS

ISSUE THREE

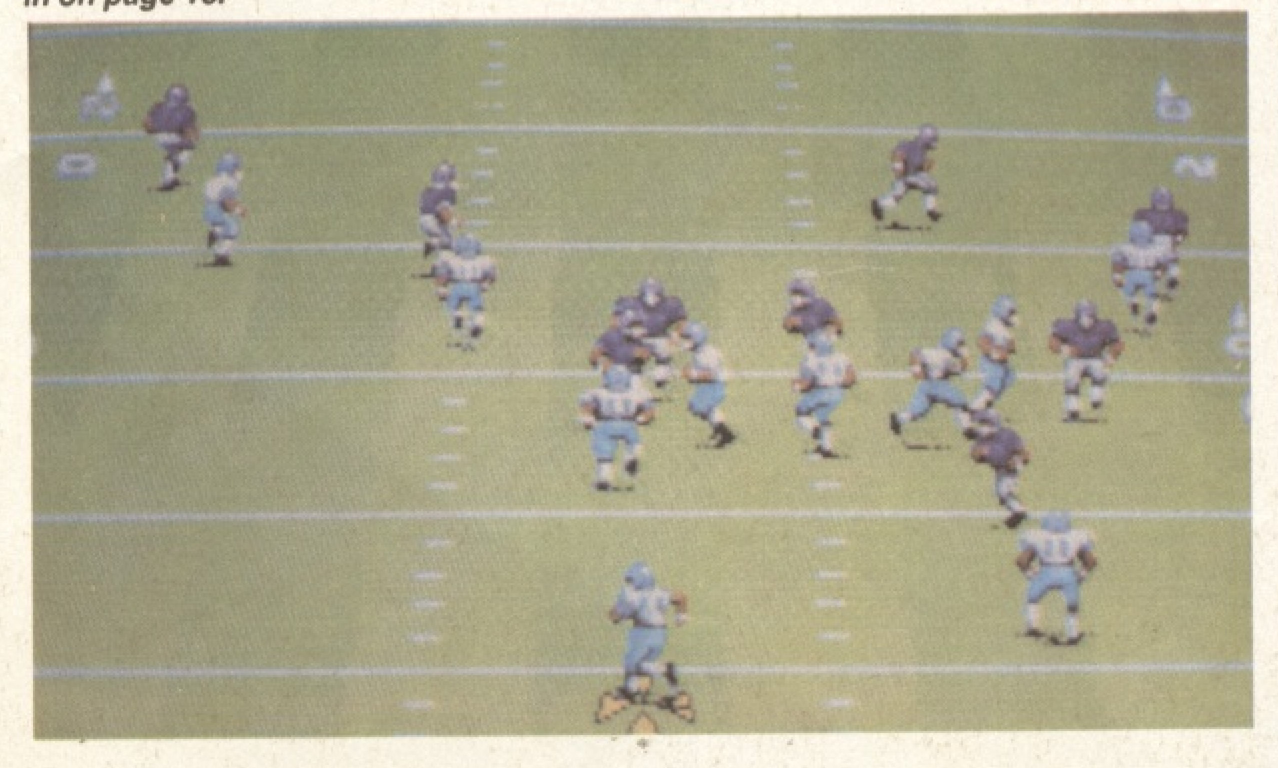
Danan Jungle Fighter leaps into action on p80.

Peace Officer - read the review, creep.

Solar Jetman equips his pod - p 42.

Check out Pang - the best GX4000 game so

John Madden crunches in on page 16.



GAMES REVIEWED



WHO DUNNIT

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THANKS THIS MONTH TO: George Negata for doing our Japanese translations, and Mbongo Kiwi Wanga-Wonga for the Swahili translations.

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COMPETITION RULES

No EMAP employees or their immediate kin may enter, but everyone else can, apart from Dwayne Minton of West Wormwood because he's a complete and utter plop-head who spots buses. The Editor's decision is final, and no correspondence shall be entered into. So you can wibble and wobble until you throw up, but you won't get anywhere.

FINALLY

Christmas is coming and the goose is getting fat - and so he should, because if he didn't the pate industry would be bound for the dumper and no mistake. Speaking of Christmas, make sure you send all of us MEAN MACHINES people a Christmas card. A bit of blatant bribery should get us a sackful - so here it is. The best card we get will win its sender a couple of games for his or her machine, so remember to put your name and address on the card, as well as the machine you own. Oh yeah, last of all. Gary would also like to express special warm seasonal greetings to his tramp friends from the heart of his bottom.

MAKE IT HARD AND IT'LL LAST MUCH LONGER!

One of the most important features of any game is the playability. Even if a game's got the greatest graphics and sound ever seen and heard, if the gameplay isn't balanced correctly, it's simply not worth playing.

Playtesting is the only way to get this right, and many companies in Japan spend months just having the game played over and over again so they can polish the gameplay and set the difficulty levels to maintain the challenge, yet not make it so hard that after a few games you give up in frustration. Likewise, they don't want to make the game too easy, or you'll finish it quickly and won't feel that you've got value for money from it.

The other way around this problem is multiple difficulty levels or continues. These sometimes help out, but throw up another problem: players finish the game on the easiest level, and then the game doesn't hold any more surprises for them, so they get bored. Or players use up all available continues to let themselves get as far as possible, and finish it quickly that way.

What do you do? If you get a game do you play it on easy and use all the continues? If you do, you certainly won't get the most out of it. Why not try it on the medium level first without using continues, and then if you really do get stuck, you can lower the difficulty and even use continues to help you out. Then at least you've had some sort of challenge out of the game, and haven't just breezed through it in an evening.

Think about this when you next buy a game - after all, you want to get the most out of your game as possible, don't you?

JAZ GOES RALLYING

When software company Gremlin Graphics arranged to have our Jaz driven through the forests of central Wales in Toyota's special Rally Celica at speeds up to 130 mph by current British Rally Champion David Llewellin, you didn't see his backside for dust as he disappeared west at top speed. According to Jaz, the drive down the narrow, twisting dirt tracks was completely amazing, with David throwing the car sideways around corners at 100 mph! Did he enjoy his day? You bet! His main reaction was, "flippin' amazing - and I thought I was a nutter!".



JULIAN "JAZ" RIGNALL
Faster than a speeding pensioner, stronger than a wet paper bag and able to leap tall matchboxes in a single bound, our Jaz isn't a superhero. He's just yer or'nery everyday long-haired techno-hippy games addict who can't breathe 'cos his sleeves is all wrong.
CURRENT FAVE GAMES: JOHN MADDEN'S FOOTBALL, PANG, SOLAR JETMAN

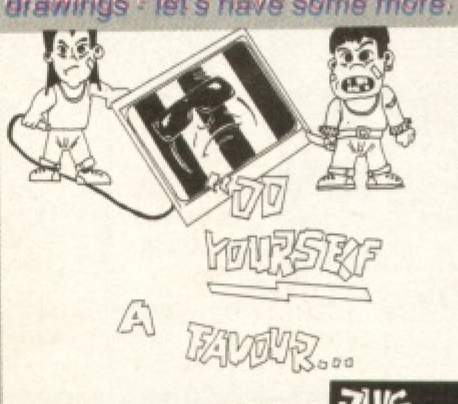
MATTHEW "MATT" REGAN
Matt's been watching the Six Million Dollar Man in French, bunking the Metro in Paris and zooming around France in a clapped-out delivery van - but it's not his fault. When he's not being treated badly, Matt likes to listen to the Cocteau Twins and play games on his Megadrive.
CURRENT FAVE GAMES: JOHN MADDEN'S FOOTBALL, FLYING SHARK, BATMAN (GAMEBOY)

OZ "I WANT JANET JACKSON'S BODY" BROWNE
Oz is Janet Jackson's number one fan, and would give his bottom dollar just to grovel at her feet. But when he's not daydreaming about the day when he'll "meet" his idol, or staring at the poster he has of her above his desk, he designs all the pages in MEAN MACHINES.
CURRENT FAVE GAMES: JOHN MADDEN'S FOOTBALL, FLYING SHARK, STRIDER

GARY "FRIEND TO THE HOMELESS" HARROD
Gaz, or "cutey buns" as he's known by his hundreds of admirers, draws all the lovely pictures you see in MEAN MACHINES, and also paints the cover. He lays out pages and does a bit of "photography" too, but is never to busy to play the latest games
CURRENT FAVE GAMES: JOHN MADDEN'S FOOTBALL, GHOSTBUSTERS, GRENADA X

PICTURE SPECIAL

Here's a pair of brilliant drawings sent in by two super-talented readers. The MEAN MACHINES one was sent in by J Bhui, and the "Do yourself a favour..." pic was drawn by Glyn James from Brecon in lovely Wales. Cheers for the drawings - let's have some more.





THANKS TO...

PC Engine Supplies of Stoke for supplying us with all the Gameboy games we reviewed this ish, as well as the Sega carry case, Hellfire and the two Gameboy light thingies! Cheers Steve! How Lowe can you go? Thanks too to the folks at the Electro Games of London for supplying us with Dynamite Duke! And finally, thanks to Rank for supplying us with all the film pics of Robocop.

MULTIPLE ENTRIES

Oi! Some of you wazzocks have been sending in loads of entries to the same competition. If you're one of those, take note of this. We don't accept tons of entries from the same person - and it's easy to find out when multiple entries have been sent in because we recognise the names, addresses and handwriting because we sort the post out ourselves! Just send one entry into each competition, and then everyone will stand a chance. If in future we spot a reader sending in multiple entries, we'll throw all of their entries away. You have been warned...

THE RATINGS

RATINGS WORK

Here at MEAN MACHINES we are committed to giving you the most in-depth console reviews possible. Here's how they work.

GAME DIFFICULTY: This tells you how easy or tough the game is. If you're a novice player, easy games should keep you happy. If you're a veteran joystick-jockey, medium or hard games are recommended.

LIVES: Tells you how many times can you die and still return from the grave.

CONTINUES: Tells you how often you can restart from where you died. Beware: too many continues can allow you to finish the game too quickly, and seriously damage your enjoyment.

SKILL LEVELS: Many games let you fix the difficulty level for yourself, so you can increase the challenge if you get good at it. This tells you how many skill levels there are.

RESPONSIVENESS: Is it humanly possible to avoid that mutant's death-beam, or does the joystick refuse to obey your frantic commands? This section lets you know!

PRESENTATION: This is an important part of any game. Are the instructions clear (and in English)? Do the option screens make sense and look pretty? Is the screen well laid out? Is there plenty of in-game info? This rating tells you all.

GRAPHICS: This includes not only the quality of the sprites and their animation, but the backgrounds as well. Graphics are judged not only on their prettiness, but on how well they are suited to the game.

SOUND: The difference between a booming, catchy intro tune and a few weak bleeps that sound like a dying Spectrum is indicated here. Music and effects can make a big difference to a game, so don't ignore this factor.

PLAYABILITY: Some games you just can't stop playing, no matter how late at night it is. This measures the addictiveness of the game, and how much you'll think about it - even when you're not playing it!

LASTABILITY: You don't want to spend your cash on something that will only last a week. Check this box out to judge if you are going to be playing it in a month, or be bored with it within a week.

OVERALL: This is it. This mark takes into account all the above ratings and acts as a guide to the game's overall quality. If a game scores over 90%, it's a Megagame and is well worth buying!

PLAYERS: Simply tells you how many players can play the game - either simultaneously, or one after the other.

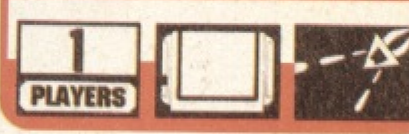




BY: SEGA

PRICE: £34.99

RELEASE DATE: NOV
GAME DIFFICULTY: EASY/MED
LIVES: 3
CONTINUES: UNLIMITED
SKILL LEVELS: 3
RESPONSIVENESS: VERY FAST



PRESENTATION 71%
Three skill levels, but little else.

GRAPHICS 82%
Bright, with well defined sprites

SOUND 74%
A decent, if rather tinny tune and basic effects.

PLAYABILITY 85%
Easy enough to begin with, getting rapidly harder. Highly addictive stuff!

LASTABILITY 76%
Experienced blasters should be able to complete the game - if not, you'll certainly have fun trying.

OVERALL 82%
A highly enjoyable blasting romp. Recommended to shoot 'em up fans.

FORMAT: This icon tells you what type of cartridge the game is on - here's the full list:


NINTENDO

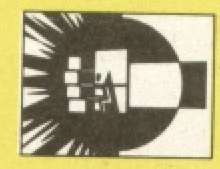

SEGA


MEGADRIVE


GX4000

GAME TYPE: These nifty icons show you what sort of game it is - here's the full list:


SHOOT 'EM UP

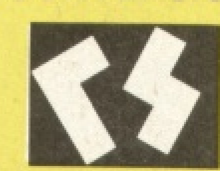

BEAT 'EM UP


SPORTS GAME

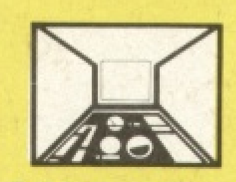

ARCADE CONVERSION



PLATFORM GAME


PUZZLE GAME


DRIVING GAME

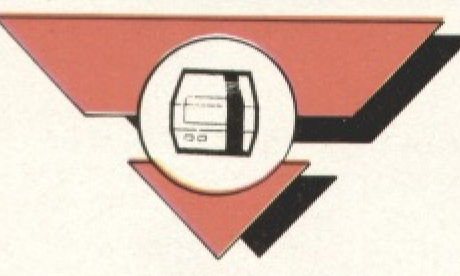
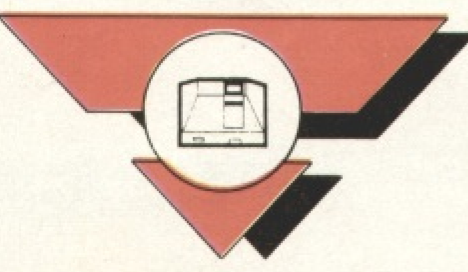
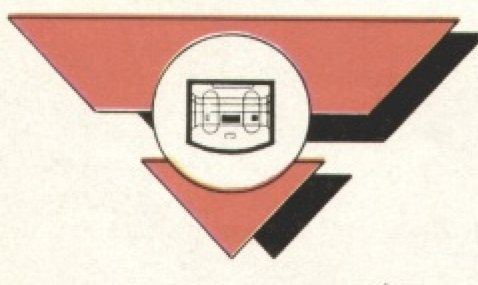
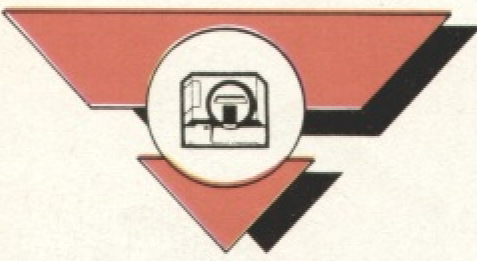
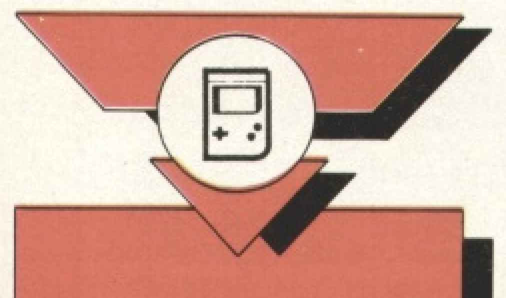

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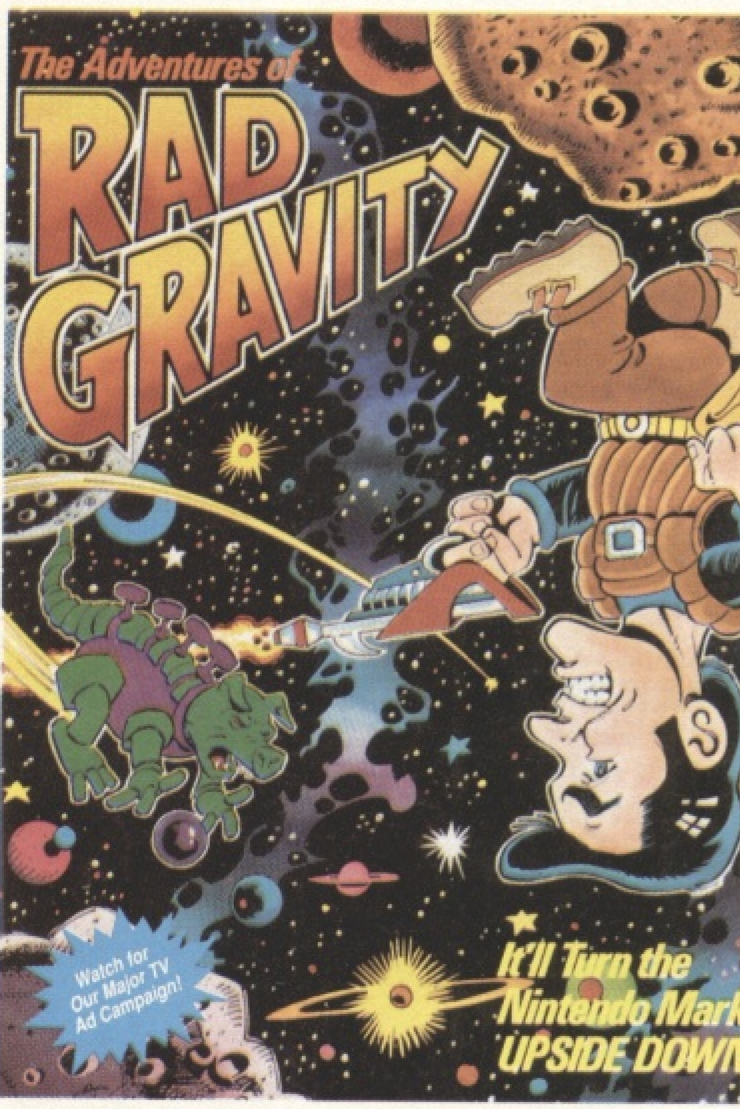
ACTIVISION GO NINTENDO

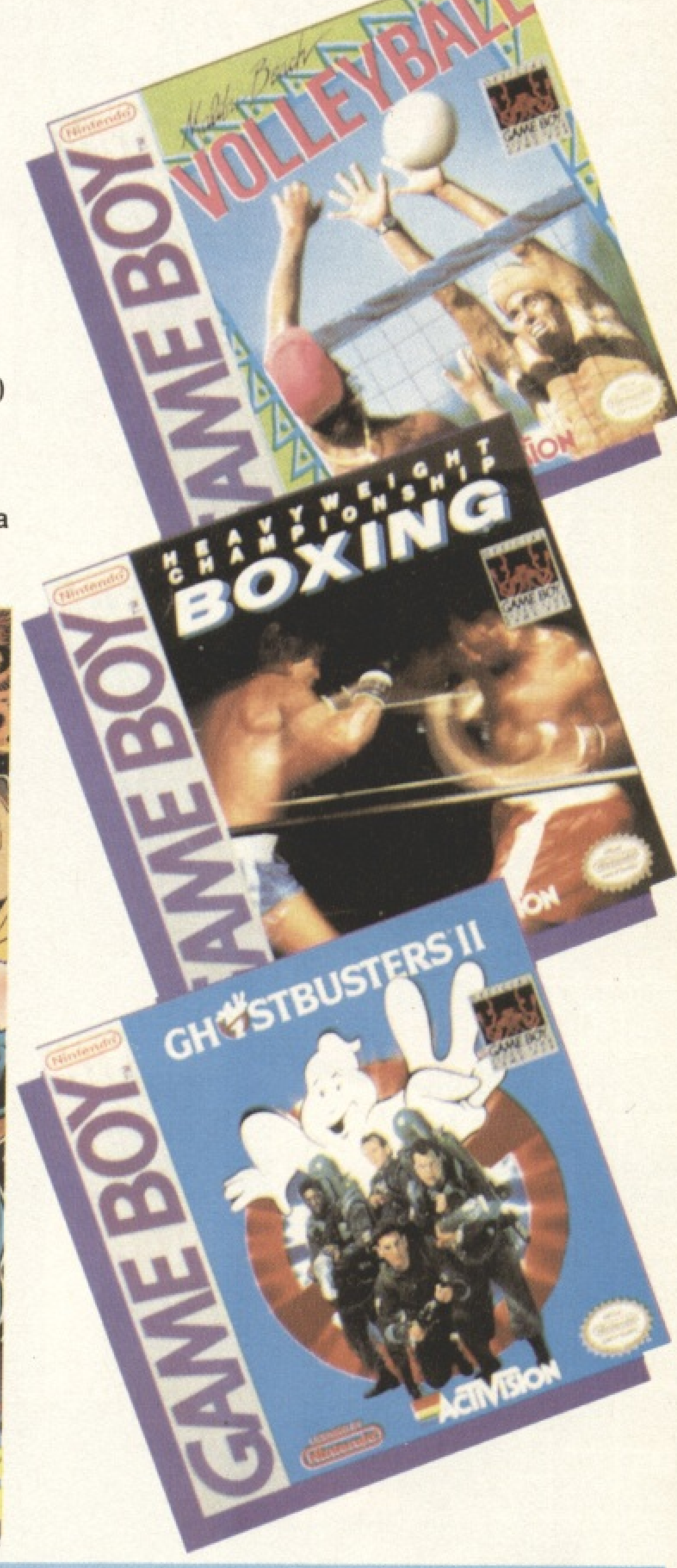
As from the beginning of next year, Activision UK will be entering into the Nintendo market with a batch of titles that have been making it big in the states.

Scheduled releases on Gameboy include Malibu Beach Volleyball, Ghostbusters II and Heavyweight Championship Boxing - all previously available on import from Japan, but now fully translated into the Queen's English and ready to rock and roll in the UK.

On Nintendo there's Rad Gravity, a ten-level arcade puzzle shoot 'em up (weird combination, huh?) where you control Rad Gravity as he battles to defeat an evil warlord and unite a scattered planetary union, and Ghostbusters II, an eight-level game-of-the-film.

They all look pretty jolly, and we'll be bringing you a fuller report as soon as we can get our hands on the games.





MEGADRIVE EXECUTIVE CASE

Fed up of wheeling your Megadrive around to your mate's house in your Mum's scummy carrier bag with "Big Shopper" on the side of it? Well, here's how to stop people from rolling about in the gutter in hysterics as they poke fun at your ridiculous sack, and instead swoon away with sheer admiration as you swank past: get a Megadrive carry case.

This swish, high-impact carrying implement holds your Megadrive firmly in place, as well as a selection of games AND a power supply. It's got the Sega logo on the side, a rugged handle and looks like a super-slick executive briefcase. It's available from PC Engine Supplies - if you're interested, give them a ring on 0782 712759.



SOME SEGA STUFF

Coming to a Sega near you very soon are two brand new titles, Submarine Attack and Gain Ground.

Submarine Attack puts you in control of a underwater craft whose mission it is to dive deep into the horizontally scrolling depths of the ocean and blast everything that gets in its way. It all sounds like good, clean death-dealin' fun, but we'll have to wait until next month to see how it plays.

The second title, Gain Ground, is a conversion of the obscure Sega coin-op in which you have to guide a set of heroes through a series of single screens, first grabbing a weapon, then shooting all the baddies and finally making it to the exit. It's a sort of one-screen Gauntlet with guns. The original arcade machine didn't exactly set the world alight when it was released a couple of years ago - wait four weeks and you'll be able to find out how this Sega conversion fairs when it comes under Matt 'n' Jazza's scrutiny.









GX4000 SOFTWARE RUSH

GX4000 console is about to shift up a gear at last, with a veritable mound of new software hitting the shops just in time for Santa season. What are these titles?

Well, on the Ocean label there's Batman, the official game of the highly successful film, Operation Thunderbolt, the megadeath Taito coin-op conversion, Barbarian II, a great hack 'n' slash arcade adventure, Navy Seals, a game of the forthcoming commando film, and finally Pang, a highly addictive bubble-bursting arcade conversion.

Other titles include Pro Tennis Tour and Tennis Cup II (two excellent-looking tennis simulations), Klax, the colour-matching arcade game and Gremlin Graphics' Switchblade, a platform game with rather bland graphics but utterly superb gameplay.

CONSOLES WE ONCE LOVED

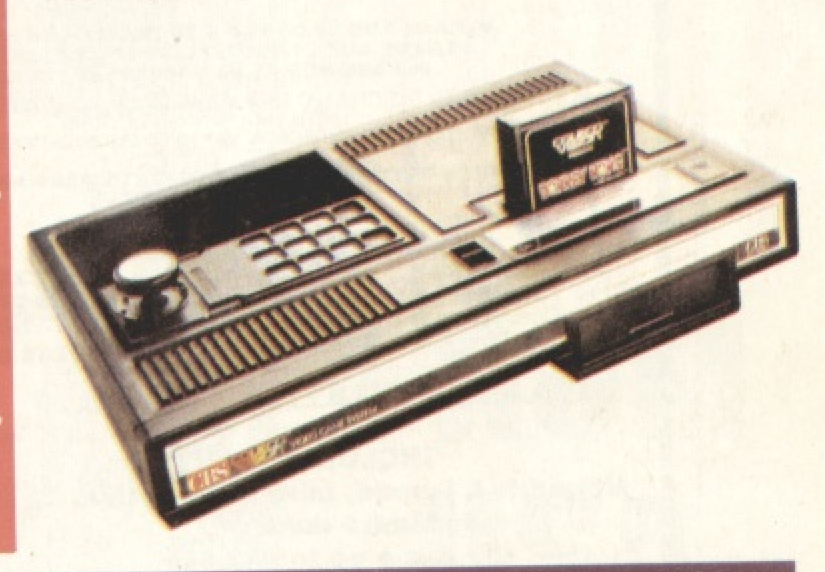
NUMBER THREE: COLECO

When it was launched back in 1983, the Colecovision stunned the world with its (by early 80's standards) high-powered processor, big memory (32K ROM and 17K RAM) and graphics system that blew away all other consoles - and many computers - on the market at that time.

The range of arcade games was enormous, with early eighties coin-ops like Burgertime, Carnival, Centipede, Frogger, GORF, Gyruss, Mr Do, Mr Do's Castle, Popeye, Q*Bert, Spy Hunter, Star Trek, Tapper, Time Pilot, Tutankham and Zaxxon, as well as some excellent original games like Zenji, Rock 'n' Bolt, HERO, Decathlon, Pitfall II, Montezuma's Revenge, Miner 2049'er, Jumpman Jnr and Boulderdash.

During the eighteen months following its launch, a load of add-ons were released for the Coleco, including a complete computer system with keyboard and cassette drives, a steering wheel and accelerator control pad, a VCS adaptor which let you play any Atari VCS games on the Coleco, a rollerball controller and a special joystick. However, this didn't save it from the dumper when similarly-priced home computers like the Spectrum and Commodore began to hit big in this country.

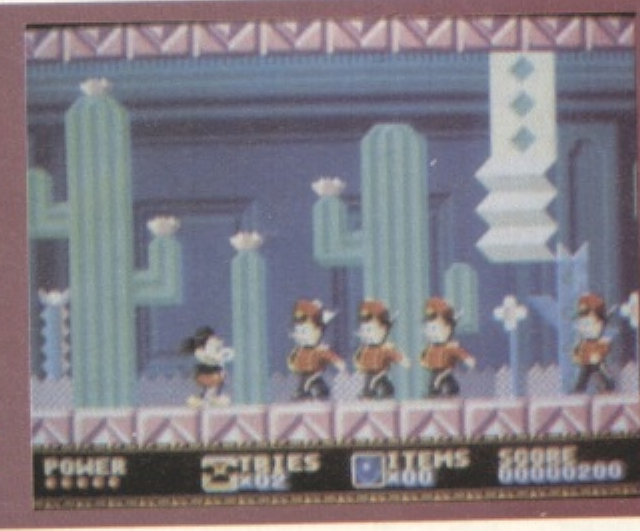
The machine is still available today from Telegames - they also stock a large range of about 180 games and nearly all the peripherals. At around £60.00 for the machine and with games costing between £6.00 and £30.00, it's quite an expensive luxury. But if you're one of those well-off gamesplayers who hankers after old arcade conversions and console classics like the ones listed above, ring Telegames on 0533 880445 for more information.



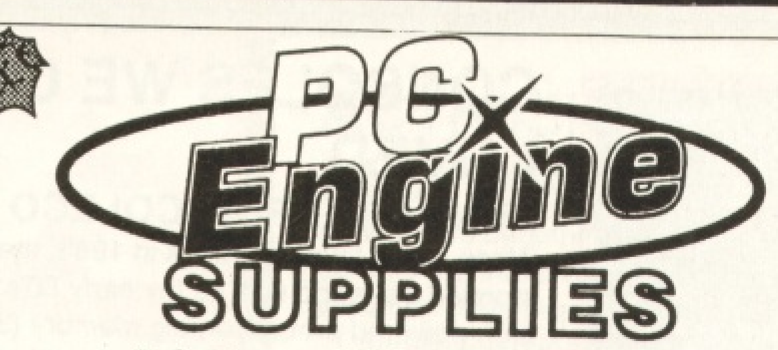
M-I-C K-E-Y M-O-U-S-E

The World's most famous cartoon character, Mickey Mouse, is soon to appear in a Megadrive game. Castle of Illusion, for that is its name, is a platform-style game in which the lovable rodent is guided through screens and screens of hazard-packed action.

Judging by the screen shots and the wildly enthusiastic reaction from Japanese journalists who've already seen the game, Mickey Mouse looks like it'll be a massive success when it's released here early next year. We'll be bringing you more news next month - watch out for it.







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NOTE: USA AFTER THE TITLE (PC ENGINE & MEGADRIVE) SIGNIFIES AMERICAN IMPORT WITH ENGLISH INSTRUCTIONS
ALL ABOVE GAMES ON MEGADRIVE MAY NEED MODIFICATION FOR UK MACHINE.

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Scate or die/bad n' rad

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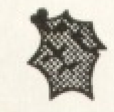
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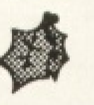


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★ ★ ★ YOU'VE TRIED THE REST!! NOW TRY THE BEST ★ ★ ★



IT'S A MONSTER

Fans of those ultra-crappy Japanese Godzilla B-movies will wet their knicks when they hear this news. Japan's biggest monster is soon to star in a Nintendo and Gameboy game!

The Gameboy title is a weird game, requiring you to take control of the eponymous monster, and crush, crumble and chomp your way through 64 different screens to find Manilla. The Nintendo version looks more like a scrolling beat 'em up, with everyone's favourite 5-storey high fire-breathing reptile smashing through the city and fighting his arch-rivals like Mothra and Ghidrah!

Sounds like a veritable hoot to us - we'll be checking it out as soon as it's available in this country.

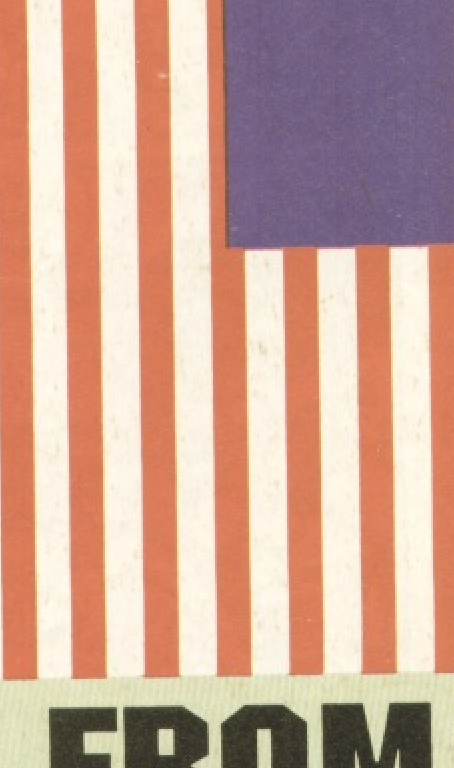


DO WHAT?

A rather strange-sounding game, Bimini Run, is about to hit the Megadrive in the states. What is it? Well, it's a 3D shoot 'em up, rather like Roadblasters on water where you take the wheel of a high-powered speed boat on a mission to rescue your kidnapped sister from the clutches of evil Dr Orca. What this basically means is loads of blasting action as you cut a swathe through screens and screens of hostile enemy forces.

If the 3D action is as fast and smooth as Super Monaco GP, this'll be one to look out for.





LET THERE BE LIGHT

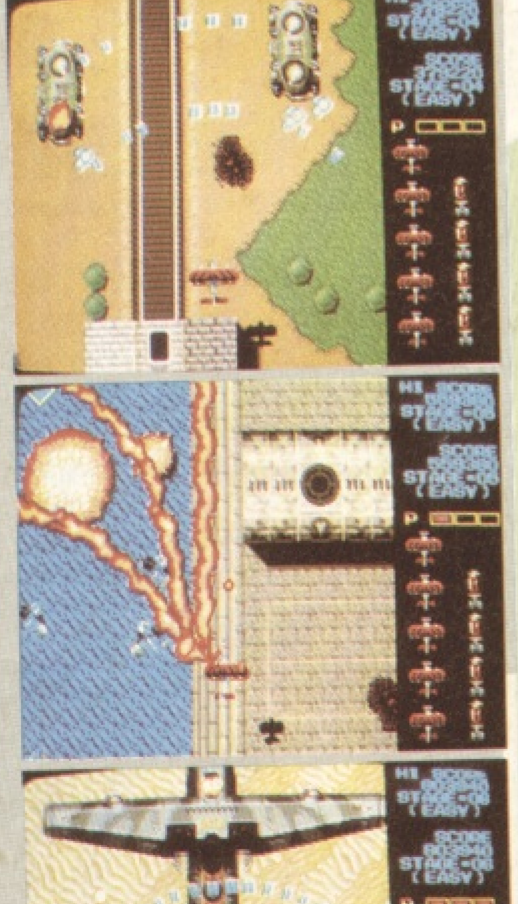
Two excellent Gameboy accessories just released in the US are the Lightboy and the Game Light. Both, as you might have guessed, are clip-on light utilities that let you play the Gameboy in the dark - an occupation otherwise impossible unless you've eaten ten million tons of carrots.

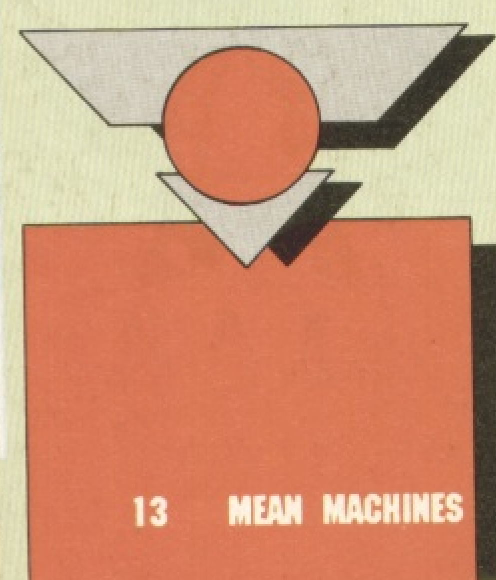
Both require batteries to operate, but they last for yonks, and the Lightboy has the addition of a magnifying screen which makes the screen look even bigger, thus saving you from myopia (a posh word for short-sightedness). If you're after something new to fiddle with under the bedclothes, check these both out - they're available now from all good import specialists.

FIRE SHARK

Toaplan, the authors of Truxton and Hellfire, have just released a new game in Japan. It's another vertically scrolling shoot 'em up in which you take control of a time-travelling high-tech bi-plane on a mission through ten time zones of mass destruction and mayhem.

There are plenty of extra weapons to pick up, including a marvellous super sweep-laser which offers an enormous kill rate. It's certainly good fun, and the only thing that apparently lets it down is the fact that it's easy to complete.



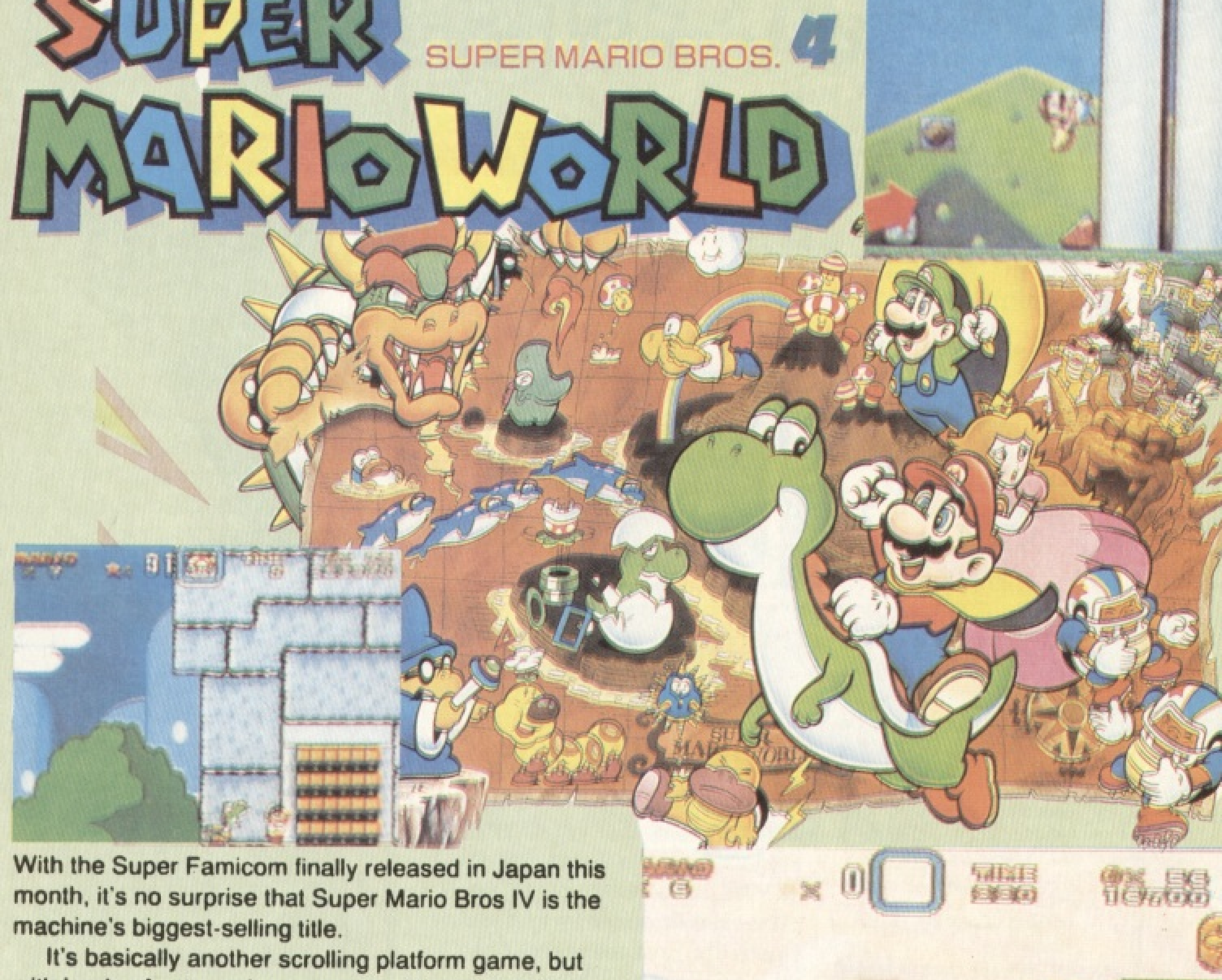


ニュース

NEWS

SUPER MARIO WORLD

SUPER MARIO BROS. 4



With the Super Famicom finally released in Japan this month, it's no surprise that Super Mario Bros IV is the machine's biggest-selling title.

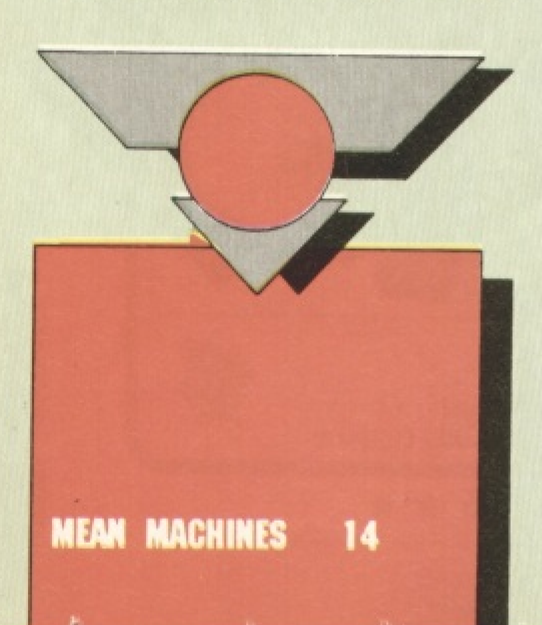
It's basically another scrolling platform game, but with loads of extra enhancements - like the fact that Mario can ride four different dragons against the massed enemy forces. Featuring superb multi-level parallax scrolling, stunning graphics and loads of amazing features, this is easily the best Mario game yet - and that's saying something!

Unfortunately, Nintendo have no plans to release the Super Famicom launch in Britain as yet, but the machine is available from importers as we speak - expect to pay around £200.00 for it, and around £40.00 for the games.

FROM JAPAN

Would you believe it? The Super Famicom has only just released in Japan, and Sharp have gone one better with the SF1: a Super Famicom and television set combo.

One moment it's a normal television set - but stick a Super Famicom cartridge into the slot above the screen, plug in the game controller and press the remote control and - hey presto - it's a Super Famicom. What a brilliant idea, eh? No messy wires. No getting a machine off the shelf and plugging it in when it's game time. Just simple, hassle-free insto-play at the flick of a switch. What a brilliant idea, eh? If only they'd make a British version...

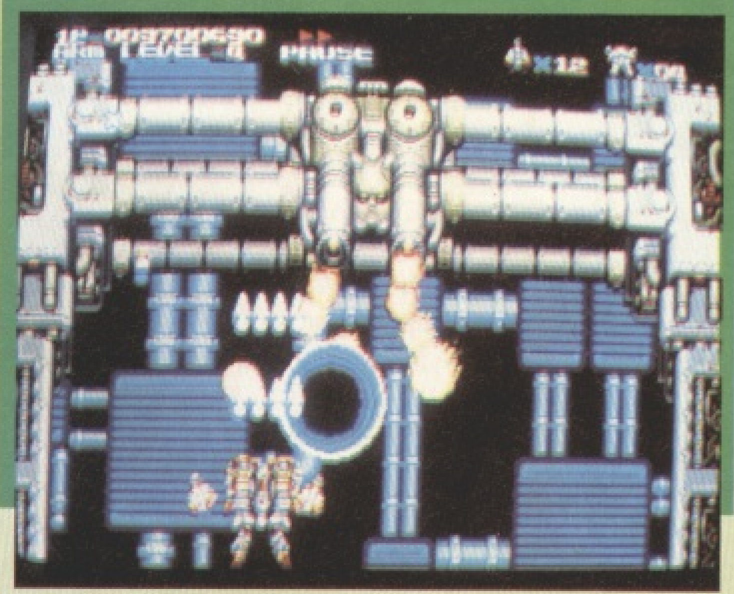




PUNCH IN THE MUSHA

An up-the-screen scrolling blaster which will be released on the Megadrive in Japan early next year is MUSHA. It's a fast, action-packed shoot 'em up with plenty of super-destructive extra weapons.

The graphics and sound are both good, but there's one flaw. It took us about half an hour to complete the pre-release game which we managed to get hold of. Hopefully this will be rectified before its launch - we'll fill you in closer to the time.



THE ELIMINATOR

CHECK IT OUT ANDY! I'M ABOUT TO FINISH THE FINAL LEVEL!
RAD! NO ONE ELSE HAS BEEN ABLE TO FINISH THIS GAME!

BZAKKK!
OH NO!
WHA!?

AT THAT MOMENT, IN THE SECRET ABODE OF THE REVERED VIDEO GAME OVERSEERS ...
ALAS! ANOTHER VIDEO TRANS-MISSION PROBLEM!
THOSE POOR CHILDREN ARE BEING DEPRIVED OF THEIR FUN!
WHO IS OUR BEST AGENT FOR THIS JOB?

WELL ... WE COULD SEND HIM ...
NO! WE MUST SEND THE BEST! SEND THE ELIMINATOR!

GOOD LUCK!
VRMMMMMMMM

DO NOT BE ALARMED!
I AM THE ELIMINATOR AND I AM HERE TO HELP YOU!!
YOW!
WHAT THE...!?

KZAP!
YOUR PROBLEMS ARE NOW ELIMINATED!!

GOOD FORTUNE IN YOUR FUTURE VIDEO GAMING ENDEAVORS!
THANKS!

HEY ANDY! I JUST BEAT THIS GAME!
YEAH! THANKS TO THE ELIMINATOR! HE'S AWESOME!!

MAD 90





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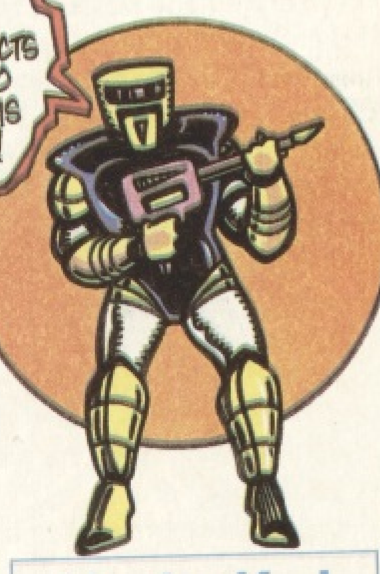
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A running play in progress, close to the Offense's line.

Forty two! Hut! Lots of chances for macho and nonsensical shouting in this game!

[illegible] lined up to make the extra point. It's virtually impossible to stop, but sometimes the Defense makes it...

American football is a game of four quarters. It's rough, it's tough and only the fittest survive! Can you make the big time on the gridiron? John Madden's Football gives you the chance to find out.

On the title screen there are a variety of options that let you choose a side from a list of the 16 most famous NFL and AFL teams or a John Madden All-Star team, choose whether the game is sudden death, a playoff or regular season, select one or two players, and set the time per quarter.

Once those are chosen, it's onto the game proper. The action is displayed in 3D, viewed from above and behind the offensive line-up. As play happens, the screen scrolls up and down the field and also left and right in realistic multi-level parallax to follow the ball.

There are a huge range of plays available to the player, and are chosen using a series of easy-to-use menus. First of all the main team is selected (big, fast, hands and so on), which gives access to a variety of plays (shotgun, running, pro-form etc). Once a play is chosen, a further set of windows open up detailing a variety of player movements. Chose one of those and play begins.

When the ball is snapped, the player takes control of the quarterback, who either runs or passes. If the ball is passed, player control is handed over to the receiver. Offensive moves are chosen in exactly the same fashion, and during the play you can control any player you like.

Although this seems quite complicated at first, it's surprisingly easy to get into, and the sheer wealth of plays and options made available to the player gives huge scope to develop your own playing style. And you've certainly got to do that to get to the Superbowl, so get practicing.

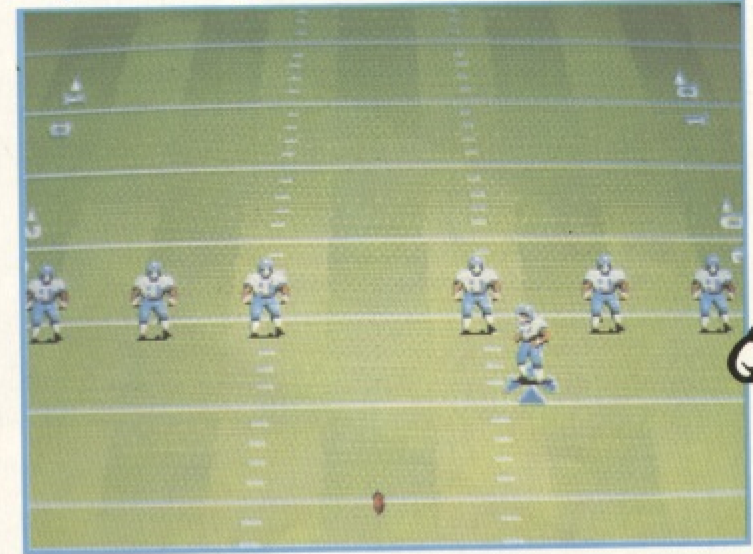


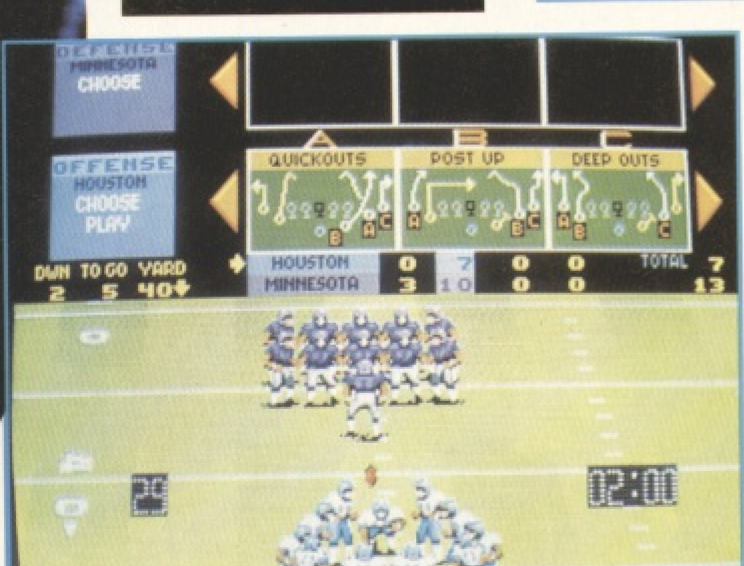


◄ *Check out the opposition's stats before the game.*

▼ *Ready for kick off. An on-side is very dangerous, but can be worth it - specially if you're losing!*

MEGA GAME





◄ *Houston choose their Offensive play with 40 yards to touchdown.*

▼ *An attempt at a field goal, worth three points.*



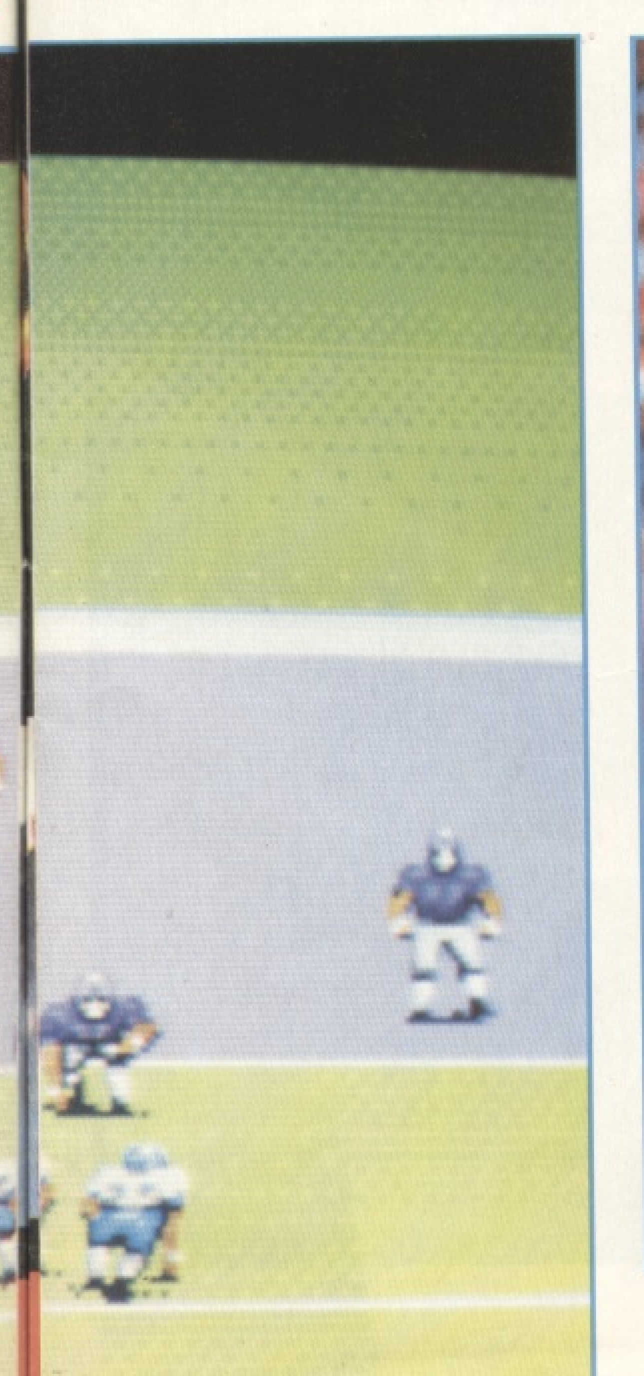
COMMENT

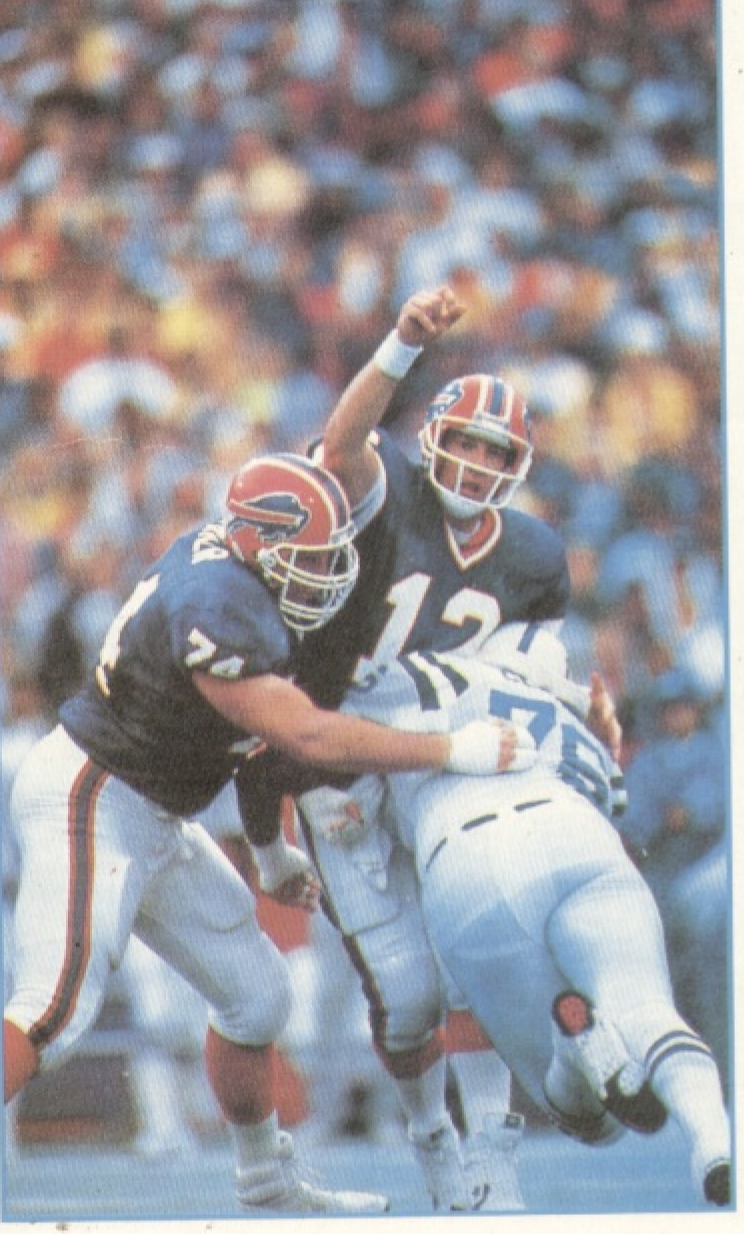
MATT

I've never been a fan of American football - after all, any game called football in which you carry the ball has got something wrong with it (unless you're Maradonna, of course). But this game stunned all of us at MEAN MACHINES as soon as we saw it. The sprites are brilliant - all the moves are there, and the players jump, fumble and dive, just like the real thing. The sound is amazing as well. Wait 'till you hear the yell of "It's good!!" when you make the extra point, and the thuds and groans of the Defense as they hurl themselves at the running back. Despite all these features, it's the playability that puts this game in the stratosphere. Don't expect to master it quickly, but do expect to have a great time trying! John Madden's Football is easily the most popular game we've ever had in the office, and deservedly so.

MUSIC, MAESTRO

John Madden's Football features some amazing music and sampled sound effects. Who's responsible for this aural feast? None other than Rob Hubbard, a British computer musician who made a b-i-g name for himself in the mid 80's composing a vast array of incredible soundtracks for C64 games. He disappeared a few years ago to work for Electronic Arts in the states, and kept a low profile. But now he's back on the scene with a vengeance - let's hope EA let him loose on more of their Megadrive games!



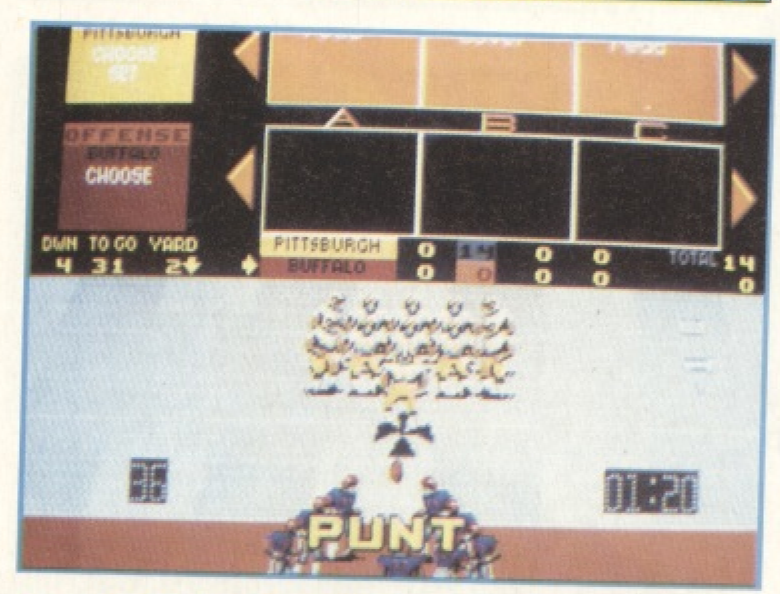


THE JOHN MADDEN ALL-STARS

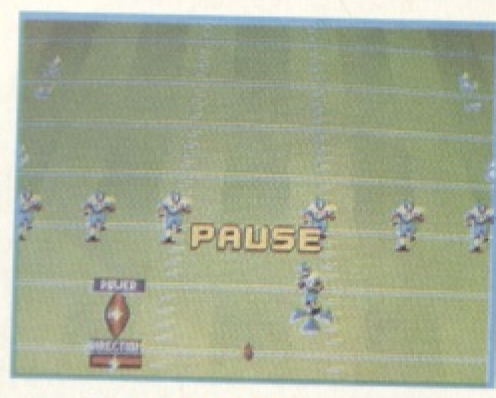
As well as featuring 16 different AFL and NFL teams to choose from, there's also the John Madden All-Stars, a team of true superstars who can run, pass and catch better than any other team. Choose it when you're playing two-player and you'll have the advantage, unless the other player chooses the same team...







It's cold and snowy, and the offense decide to punt.

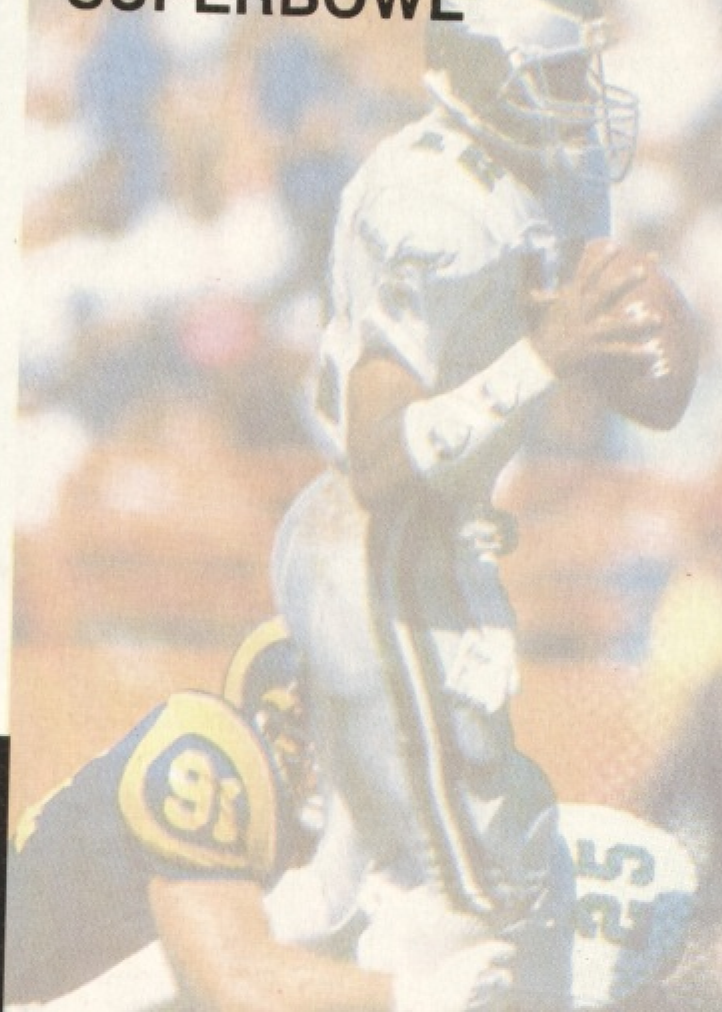


It's the kick off!



Blues catch the ball.

ON THE ROAD TO THE SUPERBOWL

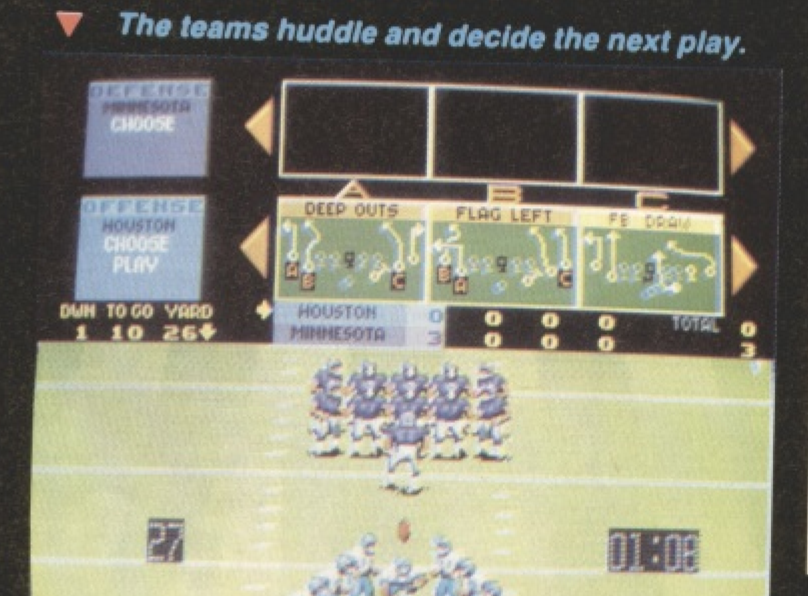


The playoff option is a long-term campaign where you try to get your team to the Superbowl. Sixteen teams line up at the start, and it's a simple game of elimination - win and you go through, lose and you're out. Since getting to the Superbowl is difficult in one sitting (requiring a full hour and a half's play on minimum time limit if you made it to the final), there'sa password system that lets you carry on from where you left off.

PASS, RUN OR WHAT?

When you take control of the quarterback, pressing C brings up three mini windows showing where the receivers are. Pressing either A, B or C passes the ball to the player in the respective window. However, if you decide to run, you're able to spin to shake off tackles, dip your head to crunch into and knock over players who try to tackle you, or take a dive to hurl yourself into the endzone or across the ten-yard marker!

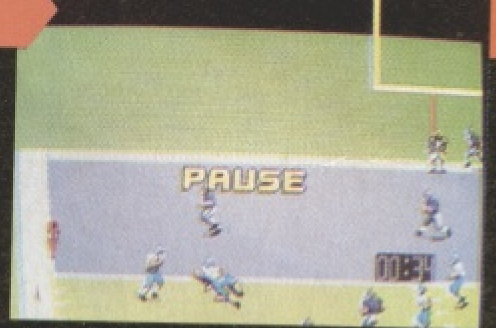
The teams huddle and decide the next play.



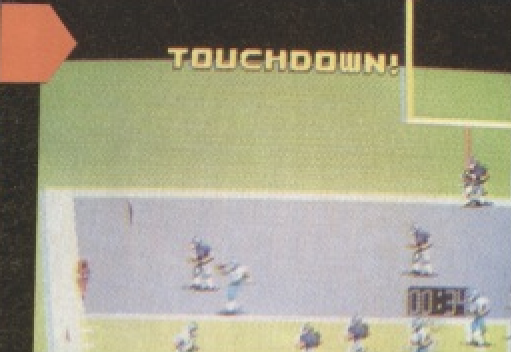


The teams are ready to play.

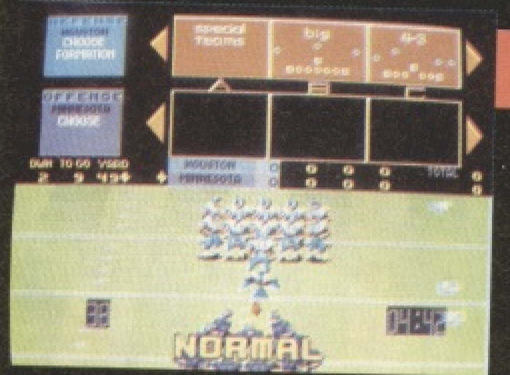
24! 38! Hut!



The quarterback dives for the endzone...



...and makes it! Touchdown!!



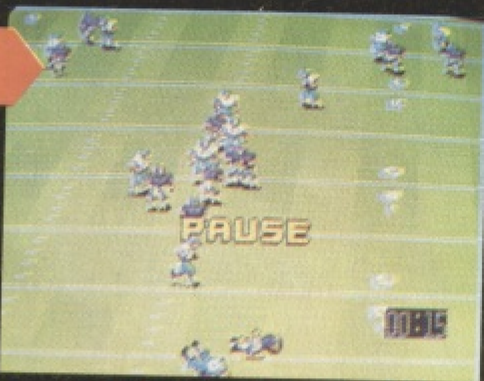
After kick off, the teams huddle again.



The blues line up for a passing play!

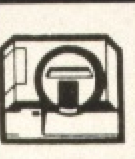


After the snap, the receivers are waiting fordelivery.



Disaster! A sack well behind the offensive line.

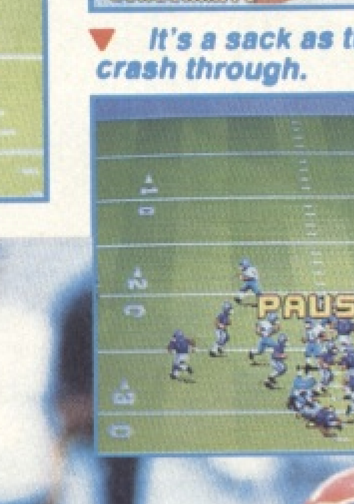




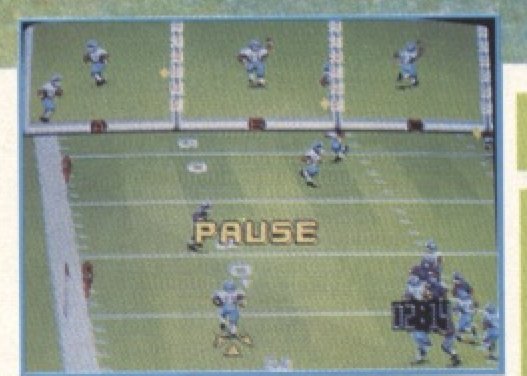
▼ The running back dives to make the first down.

▼ Other results are displayed...

▼ It's a sack as the defence crash through.



When you choose a team, you're not just picking a name. Each team has its own strengths and weaknesses, so make sure you look at the stat sheets in the instruction manual before you start so that you can pick a team that suits your playing style. Otherwise you'll be at a big disadvantage!



▲ The stats are displayed: Pittsburgh were outstanding!

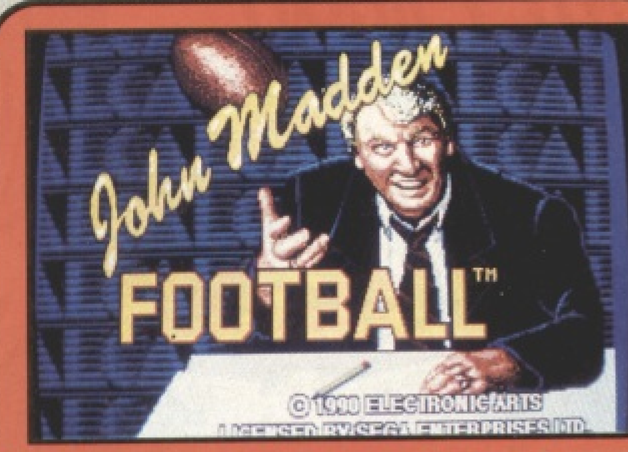


▲ The quarterback is running, and the receivers are wide open.

COMMENT

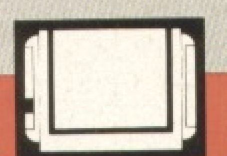
JULIAN

This is the most stunning sports simulation I've ever seen! It perfectly recreates all the thrills and spills of American football. There are so many amazing touches, I just don't know where to start: the absolutely gob-smacking 3D graphics which have to be seen to be believed, the superlative music and sound effects, the incredible amount of play options, the way the players celebrate a touchdown, the completely brilliant two-player option, the way the players all gather round before a play, the highlights from other games that are played after a match... I could go on, but I'm sure you've got the message. John Madden's Football is the best Megadrive game yet - if you're a sports fan it's an essential addition to your cartridge library.



BY: 'TRONIC ARTS
PRICE: £34.99
RELEASE DATE: DEC
GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM
LIVES: N/A
CONTINUES: N/A
SKILL LEVELS: 1
RESPONSIVENESS: FAST

1-2 PLAYERS





PRESENTATION 96%
Superbly presented throughout, with easy-to-use menus, a one or two-player game and loads of options.

GRAPHICS 94%
Incredible multi-level parallax-scrolling 3D graphics and superbly detailed and animated sprites.

SOUND 95%
An array of excellent soundtracks, and utterly brilliant sound effects.

PLAYABILITY 96%
The controls take a bit of getting used to, but once you've read the well-written manual, you'll be completely hooked.

LASTABILITY 92%
With its playoff and two-player options, this is a game that you'll be playing for months and months.

OVERALL 95%
A truly superlative sports simulation that's both highly addictive and technically stunning. An absolute must for sports fans.

OI!!! I WANT YOUR LETTERS!

MEAN YOB!

The YOB, the scourge of the mailways is back again, brandishing his lethal letter opener and preparing to answer all your scribblings. If you've got something interesting to say, or have pictures, photos or anything that you think YOB will find interesting, why not send it to: MEAN YOB, MEAN MACHINES, PRIORY COURT, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON, EC1R 3AU. The best letter of the month gets £150.00 worth of console software - so get your brains in gear and get writing!

SKILL, BRILL 'N' ILL

Dear YOB,
I would like to say how absolutely brilliantly mean this console mag is!! It has all the features that the readers want!

The number of screen shots is more than brill, I can say. What I hate about the other computer magazines is that they only show a limited amount of screen shots and some in black and white, which is annoying.

This magazine is a truly (and I mean really truly) colourful magazine, page after page of full bright and attractive colours showing all the games in it.

One last comment, keep up the excellent work!

Hon P Lee, London W11

YOB: Thanks... Hey, wait a sec. Let's play your letter backwards.

11W nodnoL , eeL P noH

!kYrOoBw tleSnlTlHeEcxe eht pu
DpEVeleLk ,tnemmoc tsal enO
.tYi nOi sBemlaS lla gTnHiEwohs
DrEuVollLoc evitcartta
dna thgirb lluf fo egap retfa egap
,enizagam lufruoloc

Ha! I though so. Don't try and get any subliminals past me, um...

SEE HAIR

Mr YOB!

I think I must point out that I ...eatly impressed with the ...ssue of MEAN MACHINES. What I found particularly fascinating was the originality of Julian's hairstyle, and could someone please thank his mum for doing such a wonderful job of it. As well as this important factor I thought the whole magazine was very well set out, the cover and interior art was brilliant and the reviews told you everything you needed to know about the game (except how to complete it!). I also thought the tips section was a nice touch to the mag.

However I did find a couple of faults with the issue. One of which was the stupid idea of somebody's to place the information of the review over enlarged pictures of the sprites or on the top of photographs. I ended up with sentences like, " Death...the b.... dest...out..". Please stop "...ing" around with the writing!

I can't wait until the next issue. I just hope there aren't any more pictures of Julian!

Barry Cheney, Wellingborough, Northants

YOB: Jazza's super haircut is a special knife and fork project funded by the Tibetan Cockatoo Foundation. They say it has great religious significance, so don't knock it. We're avoiding the text-over-pictures problems from now on, so please do not adjust your set.

MSD THE POET

Yo YOB!
I'm what's called a MSD (Master System Dude), and an awestruck one at that. I was amazed at the superb quality of this new consoles mag - it has a neat and easy to use layout and a sensible rating system. Being so thrilled by MM I have written a poem about it:

What mag contains...
Sega, Megadrive, and Nintendo games?
To give you one little clue
Inside there's someone called Matthew.

Included are titles such as Skate Or Die,
And the great Revenge Of Shinobi,
There are also excellent clear pics,
And really useful tips.

The writers give the normal previews
As well as the best ever reviews
On the middle pages are the best charts
Which include your favourite carts.

Comps are spread all over,
But it's a pity you don't win a Nova
If you still have not got it yet,
You live in another universe, I bet!
James Walker, Trentham, Stoke.
YOB: Are you sure MSD doesn't stand for moronic senseless drivel, since you have an amazing ability to put the English language through a mincer and thoroughly destroy it - I bet Keats and Tennyson are spinning in their graves. While I thank you for your kind thoughts, I wouldn't embark on a career as a poet if I was you - I think you'd be lynched by a gang of marauding bearded, round-glasses wearing, shaggy-jumpered, sandal-shod intellectuals and beaten to death with their rhyming dictionaries. By the way, Shinobi is pronounced Shin-o-bee, not Shin-o-bye. And do you really want to win a Nova? They're crap. Gah!

WHAT'S A NEO GEO

Dear YOB!
Please put my mind at rest and tell me what the heck a Neo-Geo is, what it looks like, and plays like. It has been advertised in a lot of magazines now, but I have yet to see any reviews about it. What stunned me was its price and its games. I mean £200 a game! What is this thing trying to do, take over the world?

So tell me, are we going to see more of this machine, although I can't see many of us buying it at its price, or is it just highly over-rated and priced? What does Jaz think and would you ever buy one? Oh yeah - congrats on a mega mag!
Merle Riseborough, Fakenham, Norfolk
YOB: Oh dear, you're certainly not a hip, cool, with-it console dude are you? The Neo Geo is an arcade quality console which can produce amazing graphics and sounds at a price only madmen can afford. Jaz had one for a couple of weeks, and says the games are good, but are nowhere near deserving of their wallet-crippling price tags.

WHO REVIEWS THE GAMES

Dear YOB!
Can you tell me who reviews the games and gives them the percentage as they should be out of a job because they speak a load of rubbish. Anyone in their right mind can see Golden Axe on the Megadrive is miles better than Wonderboy III on the Sega. But this brain dead person gave Golden Axe 91% and Wonderboy III a ridiculous 95%. Apart from that MEAN MACHINES magazine is very good.
Mark Chadwick, Blackpool
YOB: Coo, we've got a right regular Richard Cranium here, haven't we. Jaz and Matt review the games, of course, who do you think do them - Sooty and Sweep? Don't you think it'd be rather stupid if we kept saying "this Sega/Nintendo game is good, but the graphics and sound aren't much cop compared to the Megadrive". Sega games are judged by other Sega games, and Megadrive games are judged by other Megadrive games. If we compared games with games on other systems, Nintendo and Sega games would always get relatively low marks. It's as simple as that. I hope your intellect can process that piece of information.

A SPRITELY QUESTION

Dear YOB!
In my quest for a console, I have come across various computer magazines such as this one, and all have been very helpful in my final decision.

I thought I knew all the technicalities I needed to know until I came across the word SPRITES. Could you do me a big favour and explain what these are.
Samantha Freckleton, Luton, Beds
YOB: A sprite is a moving graphic object on-screen, such as a space ship, man, baddie or whatever. Basically, if it moves, it's a sprite!

BOO! HOO! HOO!

Dear YOB,
Why don't you review any PC Engine games in your comic to make it even more rad than it is and I would like to tell you that Dick Tracy is ALREADY out in America on the Nintendo control deck. I haven't got a console but I've got an Amstrad PC which isn't really a games computer so I'm hoping to get a Nintendo for Xmas, but of course I could get a console earlier couldn't I?
Nicholas Lewis, Bedford, Beds
YOB: The PC Engine isn't officially available over here, so we don't cover it. C+VG are the guys that cover the PC Engine, so buy that instead!

DODGY DIGIT DROP-OFF

Hi there!
I was reading the Who's Who article on page 8 about you guys down there at Console Central and I'm telling you, with being twice crowned UK Champ, I'm surprised Jaz's fingers aren't dropping off with all that competition. I guess he's retired to a more relaxing position behind his trusty typewriter. But then again, all those keys, it's as bad as a computer, I guess you can't win. I'm a Sega man myself, besides who am I to talk, I used to own a Spectrum until I had a few loading problems so I put a hammer to it!

Anyway, I'm cutting loose, keep up the good work lads.
Stuart Bennet, Walsall
YOB: Naaah! Jazza's fingers are so stiff 'n' hard they're classed as lethal weapons, ideal for prodding Gary Harrod when work needs to be done. Just out of interest, what are you cutting loose? Whatever it is, make sure you're careful, that's all.

NO PC ENGINE!

Dear YOB!
I've been buying C+VG for the last three years, but never felt the need to write to you before. But having recently purchased MEAN MACHINES Monthly, I just had to express my anger in one way or another.

I mainly buy C+VG for the excellent console reviews, particularly on the PC Engine. So when I read of your new console mag, I naturally thought it would review a fair amount of PC Engine games. Especially when an advert for it in C+VG showed a full page spread of Gunhed tips.

So having rushed out to buy it, and then discovered there aren't going to be any PC Engine reviews, I feel this deceiving advert is inexcusable.

Apart from this, the magazine is brilliant and the review system even better.
Peter Mills, Kirkby, Merseyside
YOB: We-e-ell. When we first did the dummy, it seemed very likely that NEC were going to launch the PC Engine in September, so we included it in MEAN MACHINES. However, they've put back the launch until next year, so it had to be dropped. A shame, really, but then life's a beach.

SPEW THICK ON HAMSTER JAM

Yo YOB!
I'm a thirteen year-old Dutch Commodore 64 owner and I want to buy a Megadrive, but my parents don't want that! Could you please talk to them and print this letter 'cos I have tried everything but they won't listen to me.

And why does everyone hate your name? I wish I was called YOB!
Marijn Jansen, Tiel, Holland
YOB: Oi, Mr Jansen. Buy Marijn a Megadrive or I'll fly over to Holland and stick you in the nearest dyke. Which won't be very nice for all concerned.



It's questions and answers time again, with another mountain of queries for me to answer. How do you think them all up? Who knows - but keep on asking, and I'll keep on answering. Except for dumbo questions like, "tell me every game that's coming out on the Megadrive", or "list every game on the Master System and how good you think they are". As I said last month, make your questions reasonable please, or they won't be printed!
If you've got a burning question you want the answer to, write to: JAZZA'S Q+A, MEAN MACHINES, PRIORY COURT, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON, EC1R 3AU. If your questions are intelligent, I'll answer them...

GAMEBOY QUERY

Okay Jaz
I'd like you to answer my questions on the Gameboy:
1. Is Tetris any good?
2. What is the best game you can get?
3. What shops sell the Gameboy?
4. Is the sound four-channel stereo?
5. If so, is it anything like the Amiga?
6. Is it an overall good buy?
Conor McKay, County Tyrone, N Ireland
JAZ: Blinking flip! You've got a veritable goodie-bag of Gameboy questions. Right, here goes. Tetris is superb - I wouldn't leave home without it. Which game is best? Keep on checking the reviews and buy the ones which you think you'll like best. Dixons, Toys 'R' Us and Boots are amongst many high street stores which sell the Gameboy. Just window shop next Saturday - you'll spot it for sale. Yes, the sound is four-channel stereo, but it's nowhere near as good as the Amiga. Yes, it's a fine buy!

MEGADRIVE QUESTIONS

Dear Julian,
I'm writing to ask these questions.
1. Is Shadow Warriors coming out on the Megadrive?
2. When will the CD-ROM be out on the Megadrive?
3. Is Hard Drivin' out on the Megadrive yet?
4. Is there any chance of Violence Fight on the Megadrive?
I think your MEAN MACHINES mag is totally ace and so is C+VG.
Jason Smith, East Lancashire
JAZ: There are no plans to release Shadow Warriors. YOB said that the CD-ROM won't be available until next Christmas - can't you read? Hard Drivin' isn't out on the Megadrive yet - it'll appear early next year. Yes, Violence Fight will be released on the Megadrive, but not until next September.

SEGA VS NINTENDO

Dear Jaz,
I'm 14 years old and haven't got a console at the moment, but hope to get one very shortly. But I'm tied between the Sega 8-bit and the Nintendo and I don't know which is the best.
So I'm hoping that you can give some good and bad points on each console and which has the best and cheapest games.
I would also like to know which pack would be the best to buy for each, eg Sega Master System and Master Plus. Hope you can help.
Del Boy, Norfolk
JAZ: As I've said about a crillion times before, it doesn't matter which machine is best, it's whether or not that machine has the type of games you want to play that's most important. Look through the mag and see which games you like best, and then see what system they're on. Then buy that system. Easy, eh?

NINTENDO QUICKIE

Dear Jaz
I have a few questions to ask you:
1. When will Robocop II, New Zealand Story, The Last Ninja, and Gauntlet II be released on the Nintendo?
David Bairsto, Bangor
JAZ: Robocop II is out next Christmas, New Zealand Story has no release date, and both Gauntlet II and Last Ninja are due out in the middle of next year

WILL THE BIRDS FLY?

Jaz,
In YOB's Gossip, I read they're converting Falcon/F-15 Strike Eagle II to the Megadrive and I have a few questions.
1. How will they work without a keyboard?
2. Do you think they will be as good as the Amiga versions?
3. Will they have the mission disks?
4. Which do you think will be the better of the two?
Tim Walker, Cambridge
JAZ: Oh dear, what a tiz you're in. Why do they need a keyboard? There are ample buttons on the joypad to run both games perfectly - especially if the second joypad is used. Both should be as good as the Amiga version, and mission disks are doubtful unless a disk drive is released for the machine before the programs appear. And finally, how the hell should I know which one will be best? I'm not a clairvoyant.

SUPER FAMICOM COMPATIBILITY

To Jaz
I have a Nintendo and I am thinking of buying a Nintendo Super Famicom. Will the games from my old Nintendo work for the new one?
Richard, Longfield, Kent
JAZ: The Japanese version of the Super Famicom will only be compatible with Japanese Nintendo games. So if you've got British Nintendo games, they won't work. You'll have to wait for a British version of the Super Famicom to appear if you want to run your games.

WHAT'CHA RECKON

Dear Jazza,
I would like to have your ratings on these games for the Megadrive: Final Blow and DJ Boy. Thanks.

Daniel Mann, Menstrie
JAZ: Final Blow is pretty boring, and only rates about 70% - there are only four opponents, and you fight them twice before you finish the game. DJ Boy is a laugh, but it's very easy to finish on the normal level. It'd get about 75% if we reviewed it in MEAN MACHINES.

TOM MIX

Dear Jaz,
The first issue of MEAN MACHINES was excellent. I have some questions to ask you, so please put me out of my misery and answer them.
1. Do you know what happens at the end of Crude Busters, and if so, what happens?
2. What's your favourite arcade game?
3. I am stuck between buying a Sega Megadrive or a PC Engine. Overall which is best?
Stuart Bell, Neath
PS Would you please tell my father that a Megadrive isn't a waste of money.
JAZ: Oi, Mr Bell. Megadrives are not a waste of money. Smoking, drinking and gambling are. At the end of Crude Busters you fight an alien, which changes shape and climbs around the walls. Beat him and you rescue the President, who gives you a really crappy reward. My favourite coin-op? I Robot and virtually all Williams coin-ops are tops in my book. As to the Megadrive vs PC Engine question - see the answer to the SEGA VS NINTENDO question elsewhere on this page. The same answer applies here.

"INTERESTING" QUESTIONS

Dear Jazza,
I think this new mag of yours is the best. It gives far better reviews on console games than any other mag available.
1. Will Special Criminal Investigations come out on the Megadrive?
2. Will Crude Busters be out on the Megadrive?
3. Will R-Type II come out on the Megadrive?
4. Is Alex Kidd - Enchanted Castle worth getting for the Megadrive?
5. Will we be able to subscribe to the magazine?
Carl Jorgenson, Waterlooville, Hants
JAZ: What a load of boring questions. SCI is out around August next year, R-Type will be next Christmas and at the moment there are no plans to release Crude Busters. Alex Kidd is alright, but there are loads of better Megadrive games, and yes, you can subscribe to the magazine - check out the ad in this issue.

WOT ABOUT THE GAME GEAR?

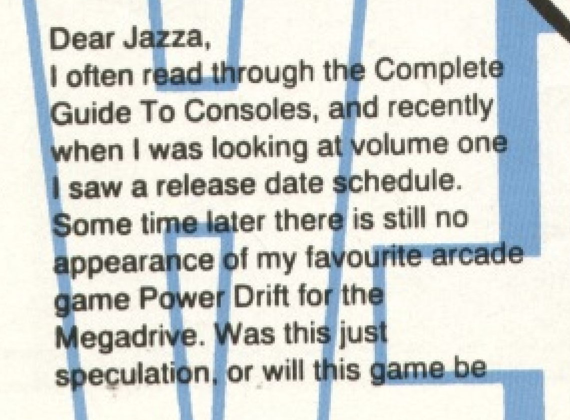
Dear Jaz,
I am trying to decide which console to buy between the Sega Megadrive and the Sega Game Gear. I would be grateful if you could help me.
1. How much will the Game Gear cost?
2. How much will the games cost?
3. Has it a colour screen?
4. Finally I would like to know if the graphics are on a par with the Megadrive.
Darren Laird, Newmarket, Suffolk
JAZ: When the Game Gear is officially released (hopefully next Easter) it'll cost roughly between £125 and £150 - on import it'll set you back a bank-busting £200! The games should cost around £20 or so, and yes, it does have a colour screen. The graphics are nowhere near as good as a Megadrive - after all, the machine is basically a portable Sega Master System.

WHERE'S POWER DRIFT

Dear Jazza,
I often read through the Complete Guide To Consoles, and recently when I was looking at volume one I saw a release date schedule. Some time later there is still no appearance of my favourite arcade game Power Drift for the Megadrive. Was this just speculation, or will this game be released for the Megadrive? If so, when is it due to appear on import?
Also, I have seen various letters in computer mags about Megadrive compatibility. I wish to know if the Japanese Megadrive will run UK cartridges.
Jonathan Low, Kirkcaldy, Scotland.
JAZ: According to Japanese sources, Power Drift won't be around until Easter. You can run UK games on Japanese machines, but the plastic cartridge lock has to be removed beforehand.

MEGADRIVE VS GX4000

Dear Jazza,
I have been saving my money for ages to buy myself a new console. At the moment I own a Sega Master System and 18 games and what I would like to know is, should I buy a Megadrive with the Power Box Converter or should I wait and buy the Amstrad GX 4000?
Freddie, Portadown, N Ireland
JAZ: See the answer to the SEGA VS NINTENDO letter. But if I was given a personal choice, and as long as you promise not to tell anybody, I'll admit that the Megadrive would be the one for me...



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Merry Christmas gamesplayers! To celebrate the festive season, we've got together the very finest hints and tips from top consoles players all over the country! If you're a bit skillful with a joypad, why not share your best tips with MEAN MACHINES readers around the world by sending them into the magazine! We'll definitely print your stuff if it's good, and if what you send are the best tips of the month you could even win yourself the monthly prize of £150.00 worth of console software for your machine! So what are you waiting for - get scribbling and send your stuff off to: MEAN MACHINES TIPS, MEAN MACHINES, PRIORY COURT, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON, EC1R 3AU.

CASINO GAMES

Robert Brooks of Middlesex has a neat tip for all you gamblaholics out there. For an unlimited supply of dosh, enter this code:

MR SEGA 8314853112.

POWER STRIKE

Once again Robert Brooks has a rather useful tips, this time for players of this excellent up-the-screen blastathon. To start the game with ten lives, push the joypad down, right, down, down, left, right, up, right and button one twice on the title screen.

SPACE HARRIER

This is a crusty old cheat from Darell Baumber of Yoxall, Staffs, but some of you might have missed it. Push up, down, left, and right on the joypad to get a music



options screen. Then a graphics menu should appear, where you can choose between man or plane. This cheat works from the title screen with the man and elephant.

GOLDEN AXE

To get an extra credit, wait until the game over screen then press the joypad diagonally up and left. Thanks to Usman Chaudhry of Southgate, London for that one.

DEAD ANGLE

Paul Plasenda of Wapping, London has a good one for players of this Operation Wolf style game. Plug in two joypads and turn on the machine. When the title screen appears, move both pads left and right until you hear a noise effect; then press any button on joypad one. Now you should be on a later stage!

WONDERBOY III

Matt Milne of Haslemere, Surrey has some more info on secret doors found in this fab game. Go to the first jump-block and leap over it, then enter the door. Now walk backwards and push up; the hidden door takes you to Dymio Dragon. The next secret door is found in the following way: bounce to the upper left platform from the first jump-block, then go in the first door. Once inside jump on the blocks behind you, push up, and you'll be transported to the Pirate Dragon's door. The final hidden door isn't a door at all, but a shop. Type in WE5T ONE 0000 000 and fly upwards. When you're directly under the door on the right-hand platform push up to enter a shop in which you can purchase 99 thunders and stones!

THUNDER FORCE™ III

Just when you thought you had seen it all...

THUNDERFORCE III

Brett Lawson of Stannington, Sheffield has a handy little tipette for this shoot 'em up. At the start of level two immediately fly down and forward into the rocks in order to get a CLAW power-up.

LAST BATTLE

What a horrible little game this is. Still, if you've got it and want to get a little bit more out of it, after completing the first chapter, lose all your energy and die. Then press A, B, and C simultaneously and hold them down, pressing start several times. You should now be able to choose your starting point!

GAMEBOY

MASTER KARATEKA

Just in case you've got hold of an imported copy of the game with Japanese instructions, here are the moves in English courtesy of Daniel Morris of Welling, Kent!

UP: Go into running mode or up a block if in combat.
DOWN: Go into fighting mode, or down a block.
RIGHT: Advance/ move right.
LEFT: Advance left.
B: Mid-kick.
A: Mid-punch.
B + UP: High kick.
B + DOWN: Low kick.
A + UP: High punch.
A + DOWN: Low punch.

CASTLEVANIA

To get a 1-UP, ignore the first torch - in other words, don't whip it. If you then get all the torches after it, one of them will be an extra life rather than a coin. Wow! What a whopper tip. Cheers very much to Alexander Boden, of Cobham, Surrey.

NINTENDO

LIFE FORCE

If playing with two players, the person who dies first can steal a life by pressing A and B at the same time. A cheat that will result in a few broken noses, we think! Cheers to B McGrotty of Londonderry for that.



CASTLEVANIA

Once through the Hall of Heads, grab the stopwatch. When you get to Medusa use it and keep hitting the nasty until she's dead. When fighting the trolls, watch out for when they wriggle their behinds; then it's time to dive underneath a platform. And that's how Mike Eales of Hampshire does it.





GHOULS 'N GHOSTS

Robert Crosby from Halifax, somewhere up North has found a heap of epic cheats for this superlative Megadrive game. On the title screen press the A button four times then move the joypad UP, DOWN, LEFT, and RIGHT. A tune should activate, allowing you to do one of the following:

B and START: Makes you invincible.

UP, A and START: Starts you halfway through level 2.

RIGHT, A and START: Takes you to level 5

RIGHT/DOWN, A and START: Takes you straight to Loki, the final guardian.

DOWN, A and START: Beginning of level 3.

LEFT, A and START: Halfway through level 4.

The invincibility cheat can be combined with others, eg DOWN/RIGHT, A, B, and START will take you to Loki and you'll be invincible too!

Also, if you hold down B during play all the sprites will go into slow motion. Alternatively, by pressing B on and off, you'll get frame-by-frame animation.

SUPER MONACO GP

This isn't exactly a cheat, but it causes much merriment for those who like to have a good laugh every now and then. If you want to see yourself holding up your head instead of the winner's cup, press and hold down the A and B buttons after you've crossed the finish line in wet conditions. Thanks to prankster Tim Williams of Farnham, Surrey for that.

SUPER HANG-ON

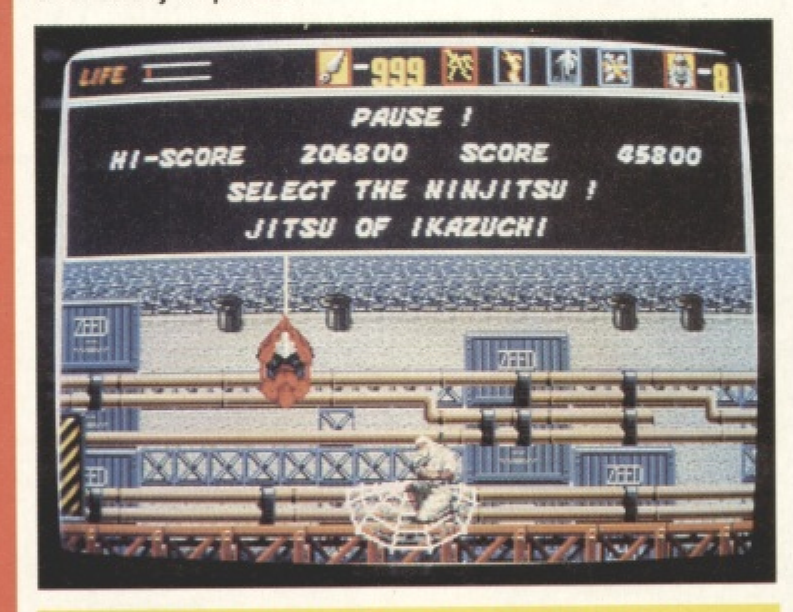
You should have found this by now, but just in case you haven't, Martyn Race of Winklebury in Hampshire has sent it in. Press A, B, and C at the same time on the title screen in order to change the time limit and the difficulty.

REVENGE OF SHINOBI

A very useful tip we discovered while playing is if you go to the options screen, select OO shurikens and then press the START button as fast as you can. After a second or so, the two zeros join together to form an infinity sign, meaning you've got infinite shurikens! Now on with the rest of the tips, which were kindly supplied by ace Megadrive gamesters, Tim Bullock and Simon Walklate who live in Stoke, and Alex Bentley, London SW6.

LEVEL ONE: SAMURAI

Somersault onto the platform at the far left hand side of the screen, select Ninjitsu of Kariu and use it, then just keep somersaulting and shooting when he is slashing downwards until he explodes. Alternatively (and this is trickier), select Kariu, then walk into him, constantly slashing. He'll walk backwards and eventually explode.



LEVEL TWO: DISCO NINJA

This guy somersaults all over the screen and throws one shuriken. Crouch, and when he lands, kick or slash him. Keep on doing this until he turns brown. Select Ninjitsu of Kariu and use it. If he's still alive, use the crouching technique again - watch out because he throws four shurikens now - and throw shurikens whenever you can.

LEVEL THREE: THE MACHINE

Walk to the right of the screen and somersault through the second laser onto the back of the machine. Select Kariu when the brain in a jar is visible and use it. Wait until the laser gets on top of you and then jump up and left to get up the step. Then wait until the laser gets on top of you again and then walk down. Keep doing this until the brain re-appears, then crouch and shoot it. Jump back onto the step and repeat the above procedure. It takes about 11 shots to destroy it, so be patient and keep at it.

LEVEL FOUR: THE ROBOT

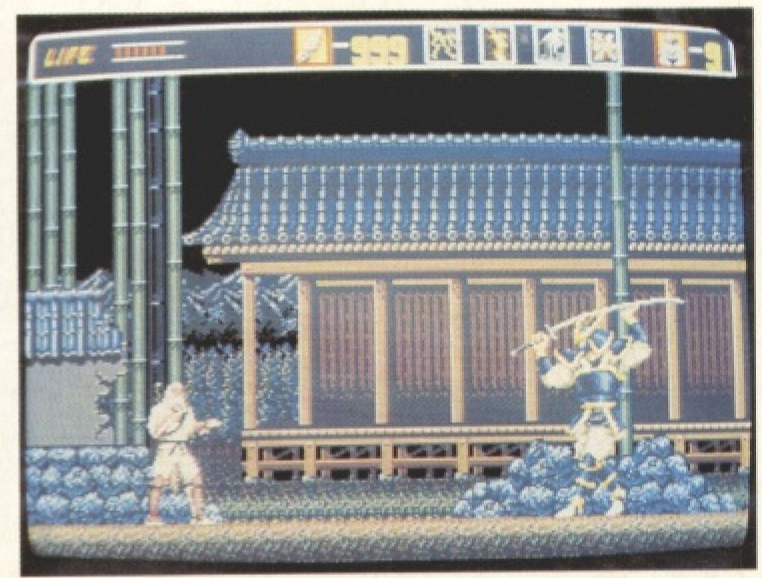
It looks human, but throws cars and engines at you. To destroy it make sure that you have at least three men because you need to use Mijin Ninjitsu. Select this magic twice, then select Ninjitsu Kariu and use it. If the robot is still alive (very doubtful), somersault and shoot it - it should only take a couple of shots to make it explode.

LEVEL FIVE: THE MISSILE

The missile has three weak sports which all must be destroyed. These are situated in the middle, to the left and to the right of the truck and can either be shot or kicked. There is a blue drip from a crack in the missile which flows from the right of the screen to the left - watch out for it and jump over it. It's best to destroy the middle weak spot first because it stops the flame thrower from firing at you.

LEVEL SIX: SUPERHERO

The superhero starts of as Spiderman, then after being hit a few times turns into Batman. First select Ninjitsu of Kariu and use it. He should then turn into Batman and fly slowly around the screen. Jump and shoot at him and he'll gradually change colour and after a number of shots will explode.



LEVEL SEVEN: GODZILLA

Don't bother trying to shoot him. Select Minjin magic and use it three times. If he's not dead after the third time, select Ninjitsu Kariu and use it.

LEVEL EIGHT: THE MASTER

Magic has not effect on this guy, so use your shield. In the background you'll notice your girlfriend being crushed to death by a wall. The only way to stop the wall is to keep shooting into the hole either to the left or right of the screen every few seconds.

The best way to destroy the Master is easy. Crouch down and walk towards his. Keep a little space between you and the Master while he's swinging his wig so it doesn't hit you. Every few seconds he tries to whip you - stay in the crouch position and shoot him once, then jump away immediately as he throws his wig at you. If you keep on shooting through the holes and use the crouch method, you should be able to defeat him fairly easily. Now sit back and watch the end sequence...





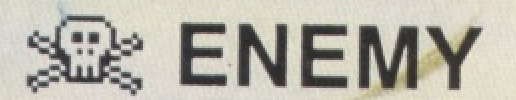
MEGADRIVE

TIPS

REVENGE

After receiving trillions of phone calls asking "'ow d'yer get through the maze in Super Shinobi", I've decided to print this map of the eighth level which was sent in by Terry O'Leary of Dublin.

POW POWER UP



ENEMY

BOMB

NINJUTSU MAGIC

SHURIKENS

LIFE-UP HEART

1UP EXTRA LIFE





OF SHINOBI

5

POW

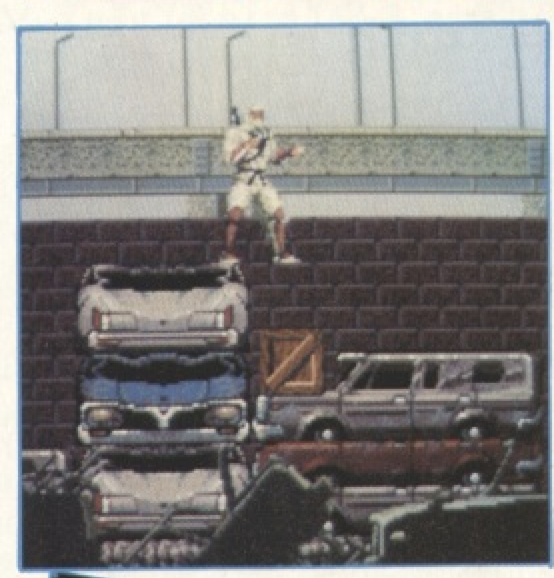
11

WAY OUT

6

POW







HIDDEN ITEMS

LEVEL 1-2
Just as you're falling into the underground tunnel, fire and you'll reveal 50 knives.

LEVEL 1-2
When you come out of the underground tunnel, walk right until you come to two moving platforms. If you jump in between them and fire to the right you'll reveal and extra life.

LEVEL 3-1
At the end of this level stand on the last pillar and fire to the right to reveal an extra magic.

LEVEL 3-2
Stand on the second lift and on your way down fire at the bottom crate to reveal an extra life.

LEVEL 3-2
On the very last lift stay at the bottom. To your right is a door - shoot just above it and you'll reveal an energy block.

LEVEL 4-1
At the very start do a spin jump and spray your knives to reveal an extra magic.

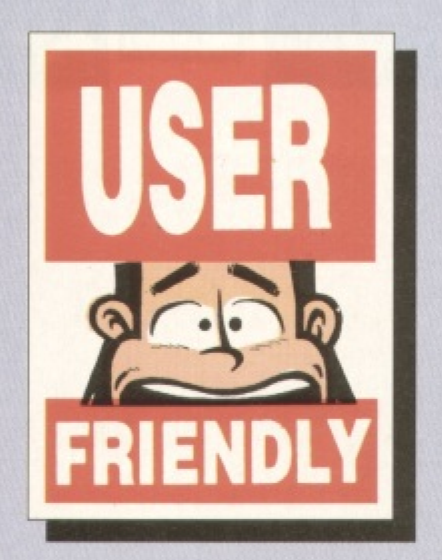
LEVEL 4-2
At the very start do a spin jump and spray your knives to reveal an extra life.

LEVEL 5-1
At the start, turn to your left and jump as high as you can and fire to reveal an extra magic.

LEVEL 5-2
At the end just before the exit sign there's a little platform. Jump onto it and use Ninjitsu of Kariu to reveal an extra life.

LEVEL 6-2
At the end of the train, go underneath the exit sign, turn left, crouch down and fire to get an extra magic.





TIPS H

Can't find that vital super sword to beat the final guardian in your favourite game? Are you constantly being beaten by some seemingly indestructible super-baddie or other? Well, here's where your problems can be sorted. Write in to the MEAN MACHINES Tips Helpline with your question, and Julian "Jaz" Rignall, Captain of the UK Video Game team will see if he can supply you the answer. If not, we'll throw the question open to other readers, who might be able to help.

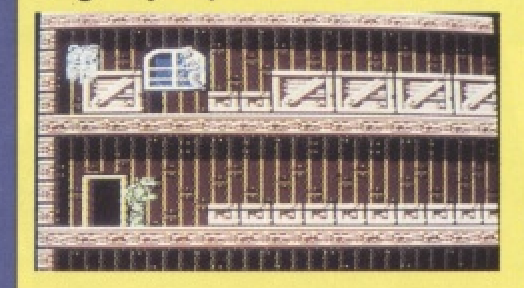
Oh, by the way. When you write in, don't just say "I'm stuck in Shinobi (or whatever), please help me". I need to know what your exact problem is, otherwise I won't be able to answer! Okay? The other thing. When you write to MEAN MACHINES, please don't enclose an SAE - I'll print your question and answer it in the mag, but I'm afraid I won't answer it personally.

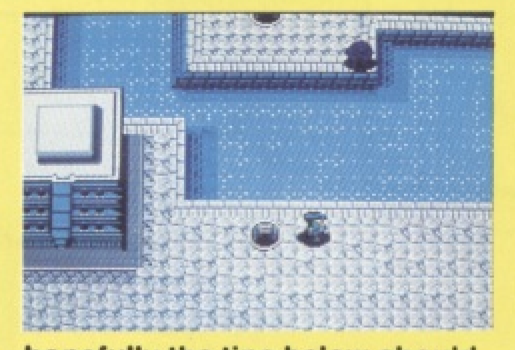
WE WANT MEGAPLAYERS

If you're a gamesplaying genius, why not put your name forward for the helpline. Just write in with your name and address and tell us which games you're good at, and other fellow players can write to you for help - you might even make new friends!!! The place to send all your Tips Helpline letters is: MEAN MACHINES TIPS HELPLINE, MEAN MACHINES, PRIORY COURT, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON, EC1R 3AU.

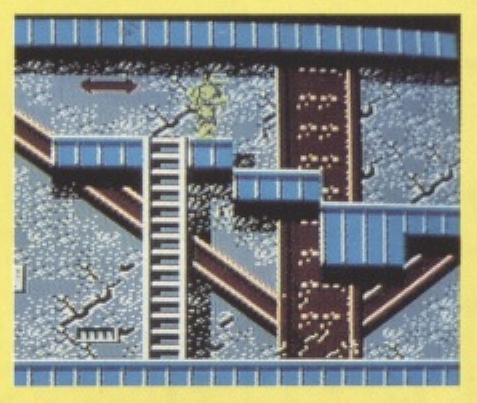
HERO TURTLE HASSLE

Dear Jaz,
I'm stuck on level three of the turtles game, and just don't know what to do. I hope you can help me.
Andrew Wade, Newport, Isle of Wight
JAZ: Flip me, what a question to ask. I'd need pages and pages to give you precise details, but hopefully the tips below should get you started. It's a tough level, with eleven buildings and tunnels to explore. One of the buildings on the top right of the map has a magic scroll which gives you amazing firepower. Splinter is in the sewers - the entrance is near to the stone bridge across the river. But don't go down there until you've got at least 60 scrolls.









HIGH TECH TIP

Dear Jaz,
Please could you tell me where the eighth piece of paper is in Alex Kidd in High Tech World?
Roberto Simone, Cardiff
JAZ: Right, it's in the fourth floor clock, and you have to use the ladder to get to it.

TYSON KO

Dear Jaz,
I'm stuck on Mike Tyson's Punch Out!! and just can't beat him. Please could you tell me how to get past him.
Ben Olsen, Wrexham, Clwyd
JAZ: Okay, at the start of the round Tyson advances and punches like crazy. Dodge left and then hit him twice in the face. When he pretends to punch, do the same thing. Just keep on doing this and you should be able to KO him three times in the fourth round. Practice by using the code 007 373 5963, which takes you straight to him.

MIRACLE TIP

Dear Jaz,
I'm stuck on Alex Kidd in Miracle World - I just can't get past Cragg Lake, Please can you help me.
Ian Oakley, South Benfleet, Essex
JAZ: Do you know that you're right at the end of the game? The way to get past this final barrier is to run over the boxes in the right sequence. Which is...

Run over the Sun Box
Run over the Two Waves Box
Run over the Moon Box
Run over the Star Box
Run over the Sun Box
Run over the Two Waves Box
Run over the Fish Box
Run over the Star Box
Run over the Fish Box

When you've completed the sequence, a crown appears on the ledge. Grab it and sit back to watch the end-of-game message.

I CAN'T HELP. CAN YOU?

Right, here's a query that has completely stumped me. If any

ELPLINE

of you ace players out there know the answer, write in to me at the Helpline address, and I'll print your name and the answer!

SUPER MARIO BROS CHEAT?

Dear Jaz,
I'd like to know how to get to the end of Super Mario Bros and defeat the dragon. At the moment I can only get to 8-2, but then get killed.
Jamie Bastock, Horley, Surrey
JAZ: There's no direct route right to the end of Super Mario Bros, I'm afraid, it's just pure skill that'll get you through. The only advice I can offer is to press A and start simultaneously when you die, and you'll start again on the beginning of level eight. Otherwise, just keep practicing!

KUNG-FU KO

Dear Jaz,
I've got a Sega Master System and am stuck on Kung-Fu Kid. I just can't beat up the demon at the end of round five - he seems invincible. Can you tell me how to give him a darn good kicking?
Ryan Krum
JAZ: Sorry matey, but I never played this one very much. If one of you readers knows how to do this, write in to the MEAN MACHINES Helpline with the answer, and I'll print your name and your letter.

GOLDEN AXE HACK?

Dear Jaz,
I've got the game Golden Axe on the Sega Master System, but I can't beat the boss because I never have enough lives left when I reach the end of the game. I've got the cheat which gives extra continues, but even that doesn't help me much. Can you give me a cheat that can get me through to the end of the game.
Ben Butler, Beckenham, Kent
JAZ: Are you sure you don't want me to finish the game for you? As far as I know, there's no cheat to give you unlimited lives, or get you to the end of the game - I'm afraid you'll just have to keep on battling...

WHERE'S DRAGON TWELVE?

Dear Jaz,
I'm stuck on Wonderboy in Monster Land. When I reach level twelve, I get stuck in the maze and simply can't find the dragon. Please help me.
M Lee, Farnham, Surrey
JAZ: Right, listen very carefully - I'll say this only once. At the start of the level, go right and drop down the first well. A fork in the wall appears, so go right. When you land, go left and watch the fireballs. Go down the first well you come to. Take the first exit on the right, which brings you to another well, which you should enter. Exit first right. You're now in a room with blue goblins. Follow the hallway to the moving bricks. Jump up onto the moving bricks, which take you up five levels. Do not take any exits when you go up the stairs. When you get to the top, go left. The screen keeps scrolling to the left. Continue until you come to an elevator. Take it to the top where you find a blue snake and go left. At the end there's a green shooting pot on top of a well. Proceed down the well and take the exit. There's another well to the right. Drop down and go to the bottom. Go off the screen to the right. The next screen has crabs (oo-er) which contain hearts. Keep going right and drop down the well at the end. Go all the way to the bottom and then go left. At the far left there's a red knight and red snake. The dragon's lair is on the next screen - just knock on the red door and you're there. Now kill the dragon by aiming at his head - anywhere else has no effect.



MEAN MACHINES MEGAPLAYERS

Here's where you ace gamesplayers can offer your services and become an honorary MEAN MACHINES Megaplayer. Other readers can write to you and ask for information on games that you know inside out. If you write to a Megaplayer, don't forget to include a stamped addressed envelope! It's nice enough for these people to put their names forward to help you - it's a bit of a cheek asking them to pay to send you a reply!

Carl Busby is an ace Sega player, and his specialised games are: Alex Kidd and the Lost Stars, Altered Beast, Spy Vs Spy, Basketball Nightmare, Psycho Fox, Pro Wrestling and Wonderboy III. If you need any help on those games, write to him at 293 Western Avenue, Acton, London, W3 OPP.

Nintendo dudes! Carl Busby is also an ace Nintendo player, and knows Ghosts 'n' Goblins, Megaman, Balloon Fight, Rygar, Super Mario Bros II, Excitebike and Batman. Write to him on the address above.

If you're stuck on Y's, Spellcaster, Phantasy Star, Ghostbusters, Rambo III, Rampage, Alex Kidd in High-Tech World, Wonderboy I, II and II, Golvellius, Shinobi, Psycho Fox, Kung-Fu Kid or RC Grand Prix, why not write to Mark Betts, Cobblers, Chapel Road, Lower Southrepps, Norwich, Norfolk, NR1 18W.
Don't forget - and this is very important indeed. If you write to any Megaplayer, make sure you include a stamped addressed envelope with your letter, or you won't get a reply. Okay?

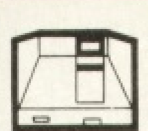




180
150
120
100
LOOK ON
FIRE
EUROPE
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TIME 1:58
SPEED98
121080



The
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OFFICIAL
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MEGA DRIVE
The ultimate computer game console
SEGA
MEGA
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play...
and replay
... and play and play and play.
The SEGA MEGA DRIVE Games Console is like that.
You think you've mastered it. Hey, after all, it's only a 'game'.
You're feeling good – huh, man vs box of microchips ... Do me a favour ...
Then it wipes the floor with you, leaves you feeling like so much
dirty laundry and laughs in your face ... loser.
The SEGA MEGA DRIVE Games Console –
with 16-bit Power ... your fingers become weapons.
£189.99 includes free game – 'Altered Beast'.
SEGA
from Virgin
Available now from selected outlets of Comet, Currys Superstores, Dixons, Rumbelows,
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WORLD CUP ITALIA '90

If you enjoyed the World Cup over the summer, you'll be pleased to hear that you can relive all the cheers and tears of footballing's premier event thanks to this latest Sega cartridge.

World Cup Italia 90 can be played by one or two competitors, and is divided into three sections. The penalty shoot-out pits your wits against the foe in both roles - you play attacker and keeper alternately. The Test Match option has nothing to do with cricket, but is simply a one-on-one contest between the chosen teams. The World Cup is the main event, with all six groups represented.

Each team has individual strengths and weaknesses, but some are stronger than others (the reverse holds true as well - don't choose the United Arab Emirates unless you're a glutton for punishment!). However the teams are represented on the pitch by only eight players each; this is probably a good thing, as the pitch is very small indeed. An arrow shows which player is "on" the ball, and running, passing and shooting are achieved through judicious use of the buttons and control pad.

So whether you want to be England, Argentina, or China, the choice - and the responsibility - is yours. Just don't cry if you're booked in the semi finals!



THE DREAM TEAM

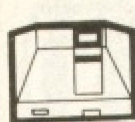
While choosing a team, it's possible to check out their stats. This helps to make the decision, choosing a team that compliments your playing style. The four statistics that are shown are: Offence, Defence, Speed, and Kick. These are rated out of five, and Brazil, Argentina, Italy, and the Soviet Union are among the best teams to choose.

▲ *The Argies go one down - oh no!*

▼ *Time to state the obvious.*



▲ *Italy moves into a striking position.*




PENALTY!

There's a penalty shoot-out option which gives you the chance to take on the keeper in a one-on-one showdown. It's the best of five kicks - so make sure that each shot counts.





MATT

Football games are traditionally a hit-or-miss affair, and I'm afraid this is definitely a miss. I suppose it could be said that I've been spoiled by World Cup Soccer, but this game is awful by anyone's standards. The graphics are all right, but why only eight players per team - and why such a minuscule pitch? The control is appalling and awkward, with no discernibly easy way of making the nearest player chase the ball; at least not until the opposition has got there first. When possession is gained, however, it's simply a question of running towards the goal. Your opponent stands next to no chance of halting your progress. A football game that does not reward skill easily is no football game at all - and sadly, that's the case here.



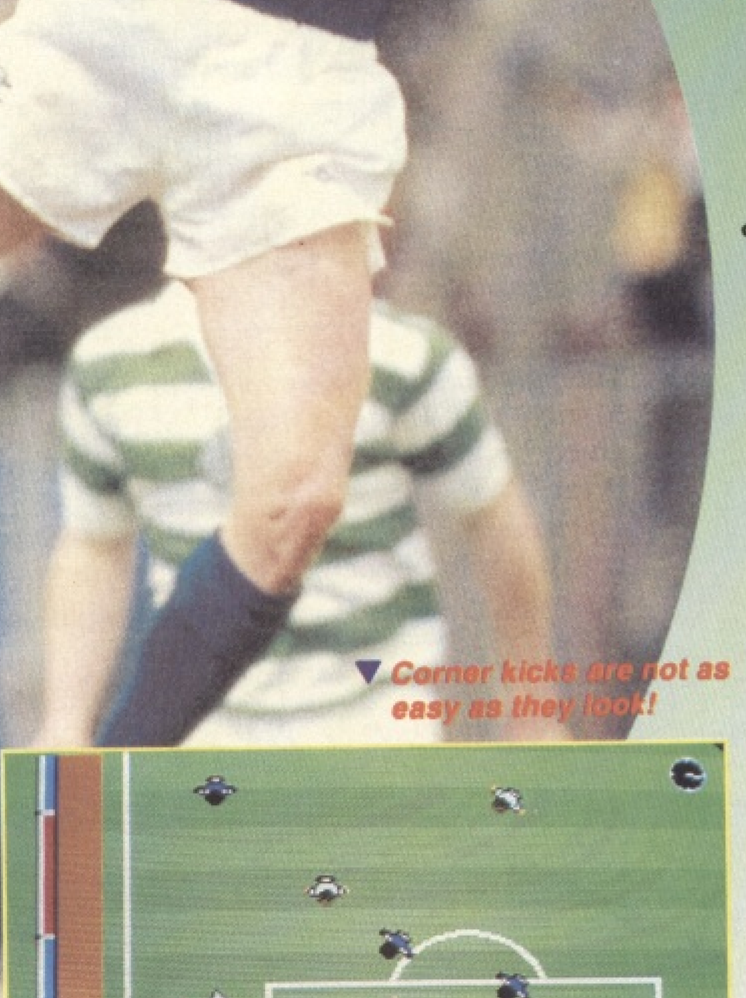
Where are the rest of the players?

COMMENT



JULIAN

World Cup Italia 90 looks good when you load it, since it features some excellent presentation screens. However, when you play the game itself, disappointment is the order of the day. The graphics are dreadful and the pitch is so tiny, you've got no room to manoeuvre. Control is very poor - you can plough through the opposition, shoot diagonally and stick it into the net easily! And that's not all. The graphics are all out of scale (the men are nearly as big as the goal!), the ball movement is utterly unrealistic and the sound is dreadful. In fact the only thing that's good is the penalty shoot out! If you haven't got a football game, get the vastly superior (and cheaper) World Cup Soccer. Otherwise wait for something better.

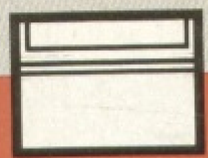


Corner kicks are not as easy as they look!

WORLD CUP
ITALIA '90
PRESS START BUTTON
©SEGA 1990
©SEGA ENTERPRISES LTD
DEVELOPED IN CONJUNCTION
WITH ING.OLIVETTI S.P.A.
AND VIRGIN MASTERTRONIC LTD.

BY: SEGA
PRICE: £29.99
RELEASE DATE: DEC
GAME DIFFICULTY: EASY/MED
LIVES: N/A
CONTINUES: N/A
SKILL LEVELS: 1
RESPONSIVENESS: POOR

1-2 PLAYERS




PRESENTATION 83%

The starting screen is fair, and the team selection screen is rather jolly. Throughout the game the standard remains high.

GRAPHICS 62%

Nice presentation screens, but the in-game graphics are gaudy and confusing.

SOUND 56%

Whistles, cheers, and other spot effects - but they're very tinny indeed.

PLAYABILITY 53%

Don't expect to play this long into the night - it's irritatingly difficult to control.

LASTABILITY 39%

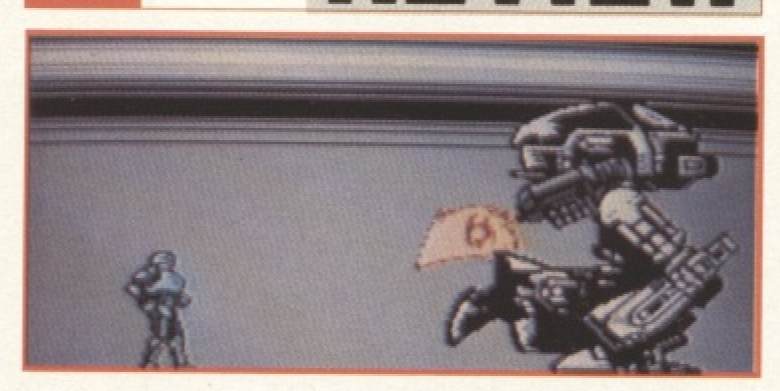
The frustrating controls and naff playability result in this quickly being relegated to the software shelf.

OVERALL 51%

A very poor effort that's disappointing in the extreme - get World Cup Soccer instead.





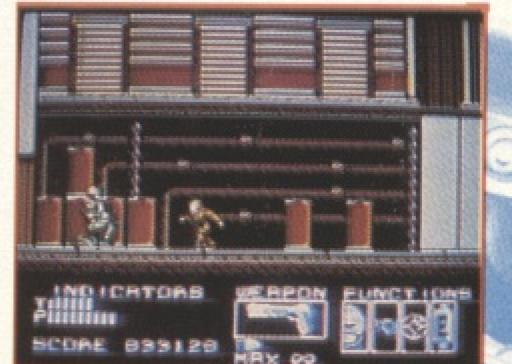


Robocop is set in the future, and the city of Detroit is caught in the grip of a crime wave the likes of which have never been seen before. The police force is now run privately by OmniConsumer Products, a giant multinational corporation. One officer, Alex Murphy, critically injured in the line of duty, is encased in a suit of titanium body armour, and let back on the streets as the ultimate in law enforcement - Robocop.

Controlling the laminated lawman, your task is to clean up Old Detroit by wiping out hordes of mindless thugs, and eliminate both Clarence Boddicker (drug dealer, and the leader of the gang of crooks responsible for Murphy's condition), and Dick Jones, the corrupt Senior President of OmniConsumer Products (the corporation who rebuilt Murphy's shattered remains).

Robocop is essentially a multi-level horizontally scrolling platform affair, with additional weapons and energy refills - and loads of bad guys!

Every so often, you need to get your targeting system recalibrated, so it's off to the firing range, to test your skills on some poor, defenceless cardboard cutouts. Once this is done, it's back on the beat, and time for more thug-mashing! It's you against them, so get to it - Old Detroit's depending on you!



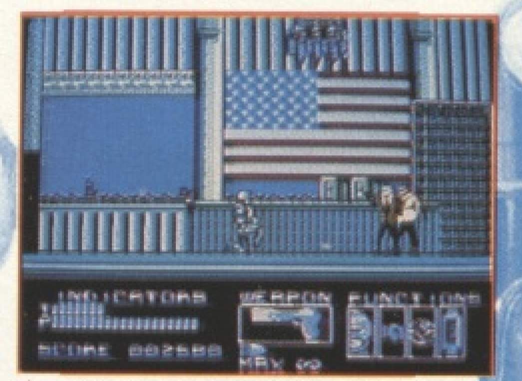
Three of these mateys run around and shoot at Robo at the end of level three.



Up in the lift - is he wearing deodorant?



This fat tramp bothers Robocop in his search for Gary Harrod.



Level one, and the hostage must live - or Robo will die!



DIRECTIVE 4 (CLASSIFIED)

Robocop, both in celluloid and video form, has been a huge success ever since its initial release in the States back in the summer of 1987. Essentially a cop film with metal bits, the black humour and over-the-top violence combined with a strong script made it one of the most popular films of recent years. Of course, once the merchandising boffins recognised the movie's true value, a whole skipload of spin-offs emerged, including toys, models, books, a cartoon series (a video of which - Detroit Crimewave - is now available), and of course, a computer game, which went to the top of the charts and stayed at the number one spot for over six months, and is still in the charts today, some two years after its release!



The door's guarded, and not even a press pass will do!



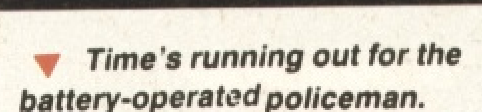
COMMENT

Robocop is one of my favourite films, so I can only express big disappointment at this half-hearted Nintendo game. Not only are the graphics very flickery and dull - Robocop's animation is truly awful and the backgrounds are very drab indeed - but the sound is also dire, the controls are sluggish and the gameplay is very repetitive. There's lots of trudging around shooting at badly drawn baddies, and very little else. Had there been more variety, Robocop might have been fun, but as it stands it quickly gets boring. Considering the all-action movie, I'm sure that a lot more could have been made of this.

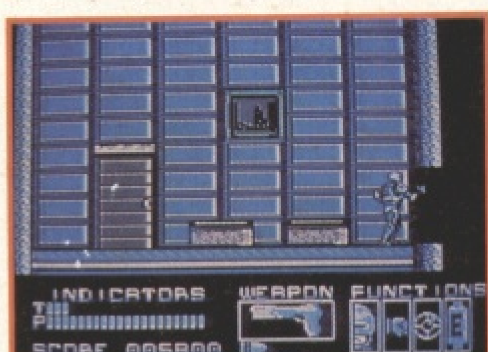
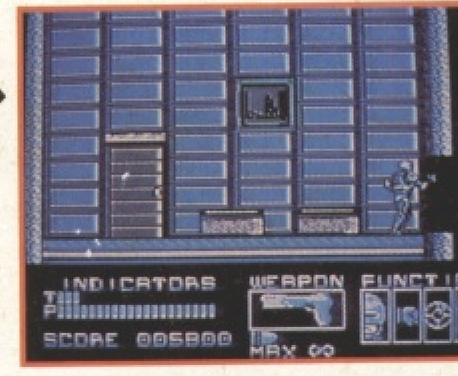
JULIAN

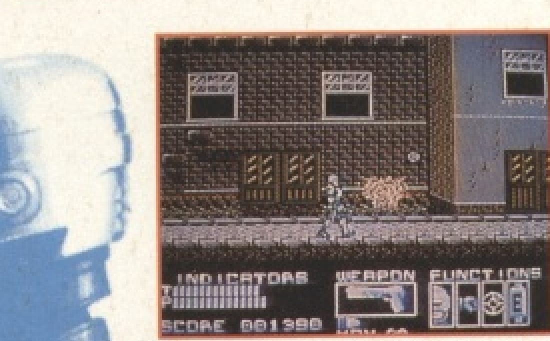


COP

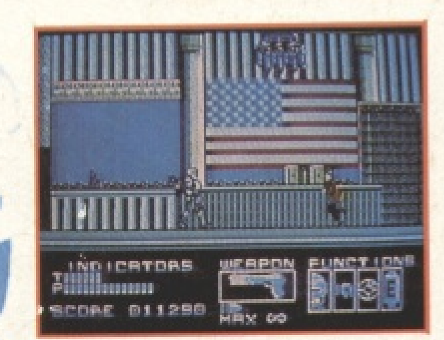


▼ *Time's running out for the battery-operated policeman.*



▲ *Robocop's biggest fear is not ED209, but rust.*



▲ *The Stars and Stripes provides a backdrop to this lethal encounter.*

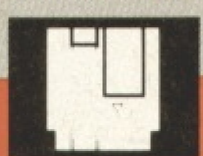
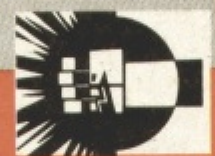
THE FUTURE
OF LAW ENFORCEMENT



HI SCORE 000000
▸START
CONTINUE

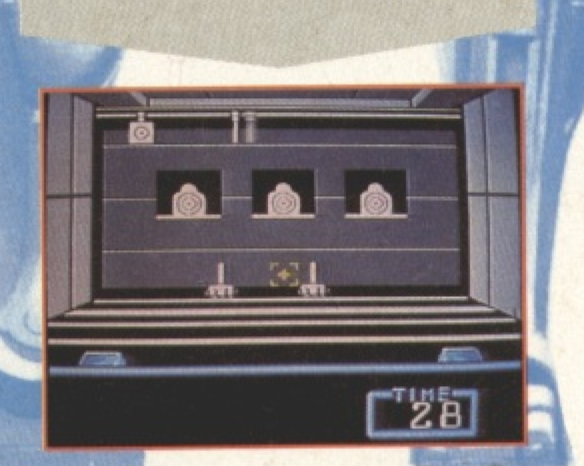
BY: DATA EAST
PRICE: £34.99
RELEASE DATE: DEC
GAME DIFFICULTY: MED/HARD
LIVES: 1
CONTINUES: 3
SKILL LEVELS: 1
RESPONSIVENESS: SLUGGISH



CHECK YOUR SIGHTS

During the game, Robocop attends a shooting gallery to recalibrate his sights. The shooting action is displayed in 3D, and the player controls a set of crosshairs with which Robocop's gun is aimed at the pop-up targets. There's a set number of targets to hit - and if you're a very good player, you should be able to get every one!



COMMENT

MATT

Oh dear, oh dear, what a disappointment. With the success of the movie and the original game, you'd think a console version could be just as good, if not better. Wrong! The graphics are dull and drab, and the sprites jerk and flicker about the screen like ghostly puppets. Robocop himself slides about like a metallic Michael Jackson, and would more than likely make any crook laugh to death rather than quiver in his boots. The main title theme is enough to have you reaching for the volume in seconds, and the minimal pops and phuts do nothing to enhance the atmosphere any. Leave this one on the shelf.

PRESENTATION 77%

Nice intermission screens, but that's about it.

GRAPHICS 54%

Poor backdrops and naff sprites don't make this a pretty game to look at.

SOUND 45%

A poor rendition of the main theme, along with sub-standard spot effects.

PLAYABILITY 53%

Apart from being very dull to play, the difficulty level is set way too high, making this very frustrating indeed...

LASTABILITY 36%

... and the repetitive nature soon puts you off the action. Sad, considering the great potential this had.

OVERALL 50%

A dull and frustrating game that does the original film no justice whatsoever.

SIDE VIEW FRONT VIEW







▲ Robo faces an electro-death here.

Life is never easy for a cyborg cop having to carry out the fight against crime all by his lonesome. Four months have passed since Robocop's epic confrontation with Clarence Boddicker and his corrupt OCP official pal, Dick Jones. Old Detroit is being systematically destroyed by a combination of a colossal crime wave and the fact that the rest of the police force are on strike! Add to that the emergence of a new drug baron, Cain, and his new super-designer, hyper-addictive drug, Nuke, and Old Detroit seems totally doomed.

Being the righteous robotic rozzer that he is, Robocop decides to take on Cain and his empire of sin and dish out some Robo-style, autopistol justice to the punks of the city at the same time. But there's a problem. Robo's mind has been re-conditioned and not only has he got saving Old Detroit from impending doom on his agenda, but he also has to contend with the feelings, memories and emotions of Alex Murphy fighting to re-surface...



▲ Robo intimidation at the end of each level.



AUTO-9 ANARCHY!

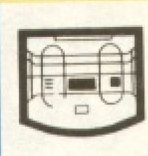
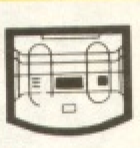
What with all this heavy combat, Robocop sometimes has to brush up on his shooting skills. In order to do so, Robo takes a trip to the police firing range and lets rip with his autopistol. As the timer counts down, Robocop must shoot as many targets as possible making sure he doesn't accidentally blast away any innocent bystanders that happen to get in the way.

COMMENT

MATT

Robocop 2 shows GX4000 owners just what their machine can do. The graphics are superb, with excellent presentation screens, great sprites and colourful backdrops. However, the game's a real swine to actually play. On the platform levels, there's hidden traps aplenty that'll have you rapping your head against a brick wall with annoyance. Progression through the game doesn't seem to rely on skills of any description. Although Robo is a graphical treat, the game itself is only really recommended to avid Robo-fans.

REVIEW







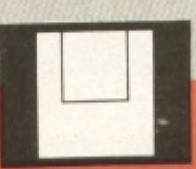


BY: OCEAN

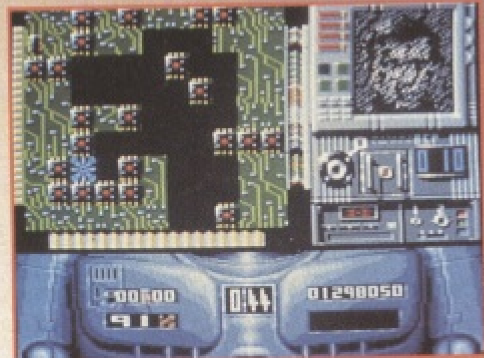
PRICE: £24.99

RELEASE DATE: DEC
GAME DIFFICULTY: MED/HARD
LIVES: 7
CONTINUES: 0
SKILL LEVELS: 1
RESPONSIVENESS: OK



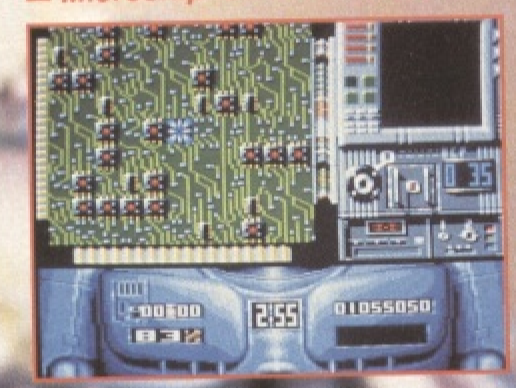



MICROCHIP MALARKEY



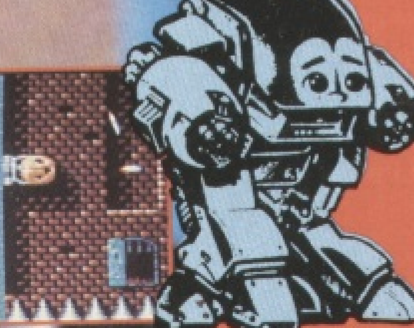
▲ *Microchip fun in level two.*

On the way to making Cain meet with a horrific doom, Robocop has to sort out his mind - re-programmed by OCP. Levels two and five are much the same as each other and consist of a circuit board populated by memory-inhibiting microchips. It's down to you to save Murphy's memories by guiding a pulser around this circuit board blowing the chips away. The problem is you can't double back on your trail, so in each level a good deal of thought is needed to come up with a trail that'll destroy all of the chips. In level two, Robocop reconstructs the memories of his old self - Alex Murphy. Level five sees Robocop struggling with memories of his wife.



◀ *Loads more chips to destroy on this level!*

COMMENT



JULIAN

Robocop 2 features some brilliant graphics - the backgrounds are excellent, and the intermission screens are superb. However, there are some very annoying gameplay features in the platform sections which had me literally screaming with frustration. The collision detection is very dodgy - Robo often dies when it seems that he's well clear of a deadly obstacle, and he also has a habit of falling through holes in the floor when he turns around too close to them. Another annoying feature is that some harmful objects are so well blended into the backdrops, you don't actually realise they're deadly until you've walked into them - aaagh! It's a shame that these features are present, because they let down the excellent puzzle and shoot-out screens. Robocop 2 offers a considerable challenge which only hardened gamesplayers will get the most from.

ROBOCOP PLATFORM PATROL

Levels one, four and six all take place across four-way scrolling platform screens. Although Robo's orders vary from level to level, the actual gameplay is much the same. There's always one route through the level, and Robocop must follow it, making sure he doesn't fall foul to some of the traps that Cain has left around for him. Spikes, deadly arcs of electricity and magnetic clamps are just some of the hazards that Robocop meets on the way to the end of the level. Here, there's a huge target to destroy, be it Cain's Nuke producers, Cain's Nuke storage, or at the end of the game, Cain's brain - encased in the awesome Robocop 2 robot.

PRESENTATION 85%
Excellent presentation screens help link the gameplay to the actual movie and create a decent atmosphere.

GRAPHICS 84%
Graphically great, Robocop 2 is a treat to watch with decent backgrounds, sprites and faultless scrolling.

SOUND 69%
The GX4000 has an attempt at a Robocop-ish theme tune, and there are a few effects here and there.

PLAYABILITY 75%
Keep all your sharp instruments away from the GX4000 when playing - Robocop 2 is incredibly frustrating!

LASTABILITY 71%
Six levels that'll take a lot of mastering, but the frustration factor may put you off before you see them all.

OVERALL 74%
A graphical tour-de-force let down by an incredibly high frustration level.

COMP

HOTLINES

MEAN MACHINES

WIN A GAMEBOY

0839 121 174

It's thrillin'. It's chillin'. It costs more than a shillin'. The Gameboy is the most portable bundle of fun in the entire universe, and it could be yours if you win this month's Gameboy hotline. What do you need to do? Just dial the number and listen to the instructions. It couldn't be simpler.

WIN A MEGADRIVE

0839 121 180

What's the hottest games machine around? The Megadrive of course. After all, with games like Hellfire, John Madden's Football and Super Monaco GP who can disagree. Like to try and win one? Well, just dial the hotline number and give it a go. Remember, if you don't call, you don't stand a chance of winning.

WIN AN ATARI LYNX

0839 121 187

Atari's powerful Lynx is just beginning to build up its software base, with titles like Klax and Slime World proving that the machine has loads of potential. Like to try and win one? Well, let your fingers do the walking over to the phone, punch in the digits and place your lug-hole to the receiver...

WIN £150 WORTH OF CONSOLE SOFTWARE

0839 121 188

Are we mad? Are we crazy? Gibber! Quack! Woo-oop! Wibble! Wibble! Of course we are, otherwise we wouldn't be giving away £150 worth of console software on this line, we'd be keeping it all for ourselves. Want it? Dial up the number and it could be yours if you win...

WIN 3 GAMES OF YOUR CHOICE

0839 121 189

Got a Nintendo? Sega? Megadrive? Gameboy? GX4000? Well, listen up chum, because this one's for you. If you win this hotline you get the choice of any three games for your system (as long as they're available in the shops). Good, eh? So what are you waiting for - grab the horn and listen up!

IF YOU'RE UNDER 18, PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU HAVE THE PERMISSION OF WHOEVER PAYS THE PHONE BILL BEFORE YOU DIAL. ALL CALLS ARE CHARGED AT 44P PER MINUTE (PEAK RATE) AND 33P PER MINUTE (OFF PEAK). NO PROGRAMME IS LONGER THAN THREE MINUTES.

SOL JETM

After spending several years in retirement, Jetman has decided to face the universe again, this time with another get-rich quick scheme with which to make his fortune. Jetman joins up with the Federation of Space Loonies and uses up his last remaining credits on a new fleet of space garbage collectors. With these worthy star vessels he can visit any planet he desires, collect all the rubbish and make a fat pile of cash out of it.

But when Jetman arrives at his first destination, among the rubbish he finds a piece of the once great Golden Warpship. With dollar-signs in his eyes, Jetman realises he could make a huge amount of wonga if he could find the other pieces of this ship and then sell it. The only problem is that there's only one piece of the ship on each of the planets in this solar system, so in order to succeed, Jetman needs to undertake a long and danger-fraught journey.

On all of the planets not only are stacks of enemy gun emplacements and alien craft out to get our hero, but Jetman has to battle against the laws of gravity itself in order to be victorious!

▲ *Jetman arrives at a new planet.*

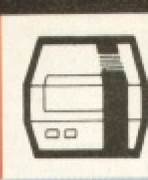
THE STORY SO FAR...

Jetman started out life in the classic Spectrum game: Jetpac. This single screen frolic involved Jetman building a rocket and then fueling it up before making his escape to another screen. The follow-up, Lunar Jetman, took our brain-dead pal with the jet pack into a horizontally scrolling playfield, where he blasted aliens Defender-style or climbed into his moon buggy and collected various weaponry to bolt onto his craft. After that, nothing was seen or heard from Jetman... Until now when Rare (the original programmers) dusted him down and gave him his own new game on the Nintendo!



▲ *A spacesuit is Jetman's only protection!*



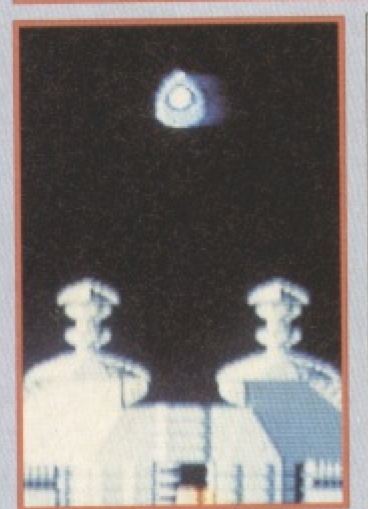






JOINING THE JET-SET

The main gist of the gameplay involves Jetman getting into his spaceship and leaving base to collect the various garbage on the planet. His ship is controlled in a style familiar to anyone who has played Gravitar in the arcade. Gravity has an effect on the ship and thrusters must be engaged in order to stay aloft. Jetman has to collect all of the goodies from the planet and deposit them back in his base in order to progress. If his control of the ship isn't very good there's a good chance it'll be lost as it collides with the landscape, leaving Jetman with just his suit and jet pack for protection. However, new ships can be collected from base. Beware though, because ships are in short supply.



▲ *Our hero sets out from base.*





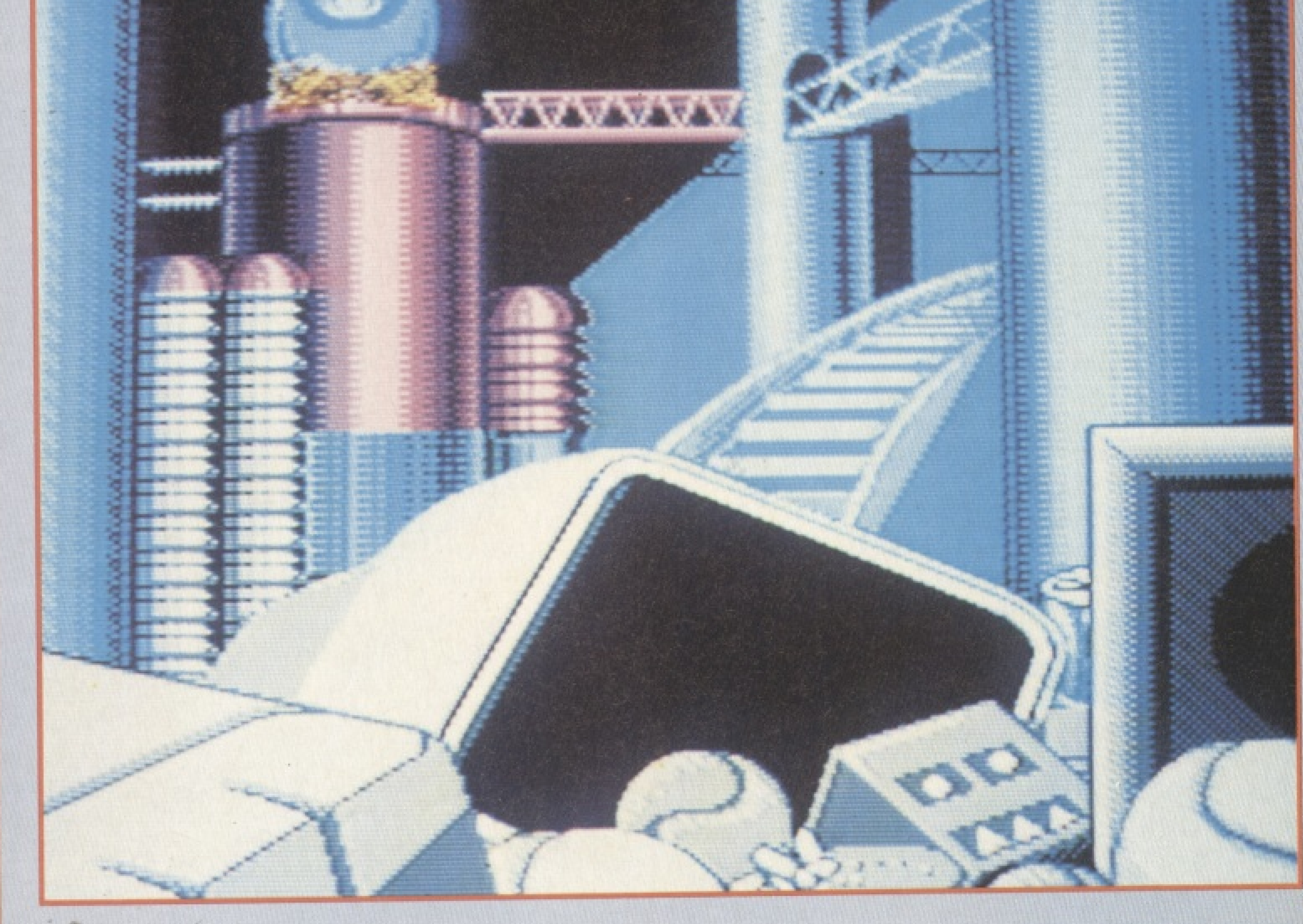
▼ *Jetman's ship prepares for take-off!*

COMMENT



MATT

Wow! The old Spectrum Jetman classics were good, but for sheer playability, fun and excitement, Solar Jetman really stomps on them! The prospect of Gravitar-style gameplay with plenty of bolt-on weaponry makes for a totally fantastic game! The gravity alters for each world, and on some of the levels simply keeping control of your ships is the greatest challenge. With a depth of gameplay second to none and amazing graphics and sound, Solar Jetman ranks as the greatest NES cartridge released this year!



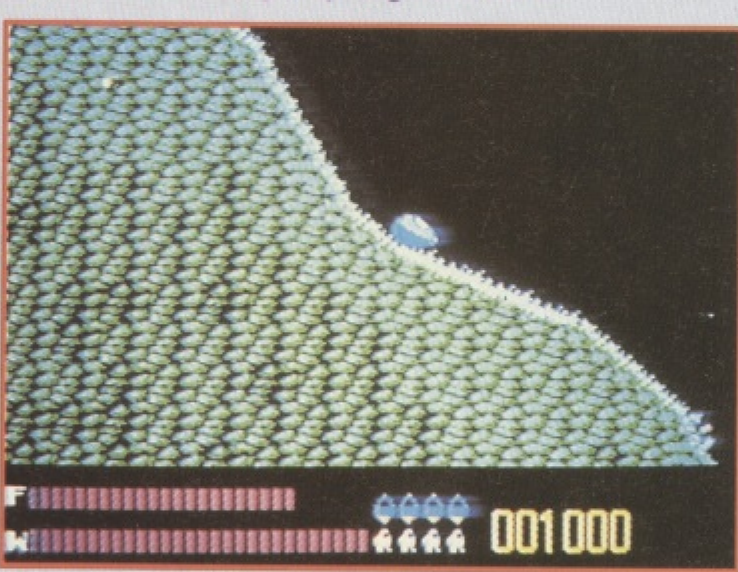




REVIEW



Collect the Warpship segment here.



Jetman's ship collides with the ground!



INTERSTELLAR SHOPPING

As Jetman travels from planet to planet, he finds loads of extra goodies to bolt onto his craft. Amongst the planet's rubbish, Jetman finds equipment like a powerful shield generator - just the business for making those near-fatal collisions with the landscape slightly less risky. Also, at the end of the level when the Warpship segment has been collected, Jetman flies into an intergalactic shop to tool up with the latest goodies. Here, he finds the likes of more efficient engines, homing missiles, time bombs and titanium bullet packs!

COMMENT



JULIAN

Jetpac and Jetman were amongst the first computer games I ever played, and it's great to see that great space loony, Jetman, back in action. The action is very similar to the old coin-op Gravitar, and also like the brilliant computer game Thrust, but there's much more to it. The gameplay is very tough, and it takes quite a while to get used to the gravity - especially when you've got a great hunk of space garbage in tow - and the actual planets themselves are absolutely huge. It certainly helps to draw a map as you fly around so you don't get completely lost. The graphics are great, with lots of neat little effects, and the sound is similarly excellent. Put all those factors together and you've got a simply brilliant Nintendo title which is an essential part of your collection.



The planet's stats are revealed before the mission begins.



Laser pits blast our hero!

Survive the bonus screen!



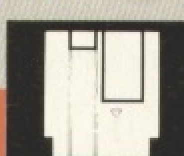


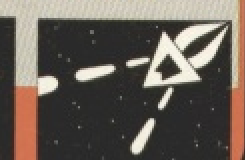
BY: TRADEWEST

PRICE: £34.99

RELEASE DATE: JAN
GAME DIFFICULTY: MED/HARD
LIVES: 3
CONTINUES: 0
SKILL LEVELS: 1
RESPONSIVENESS: SUPER







PRESENTATION 95%

Brilliant! Solar Jetman has plenty of comic strip-style presentation screens and a password system.

GRAPHICS 95%

For artistic accomplishment, smoothness, and variety, Solar Jetman is second to none!

SOUND 91%

More than accomplished tunes and effects.

PLAYABILITY 94%

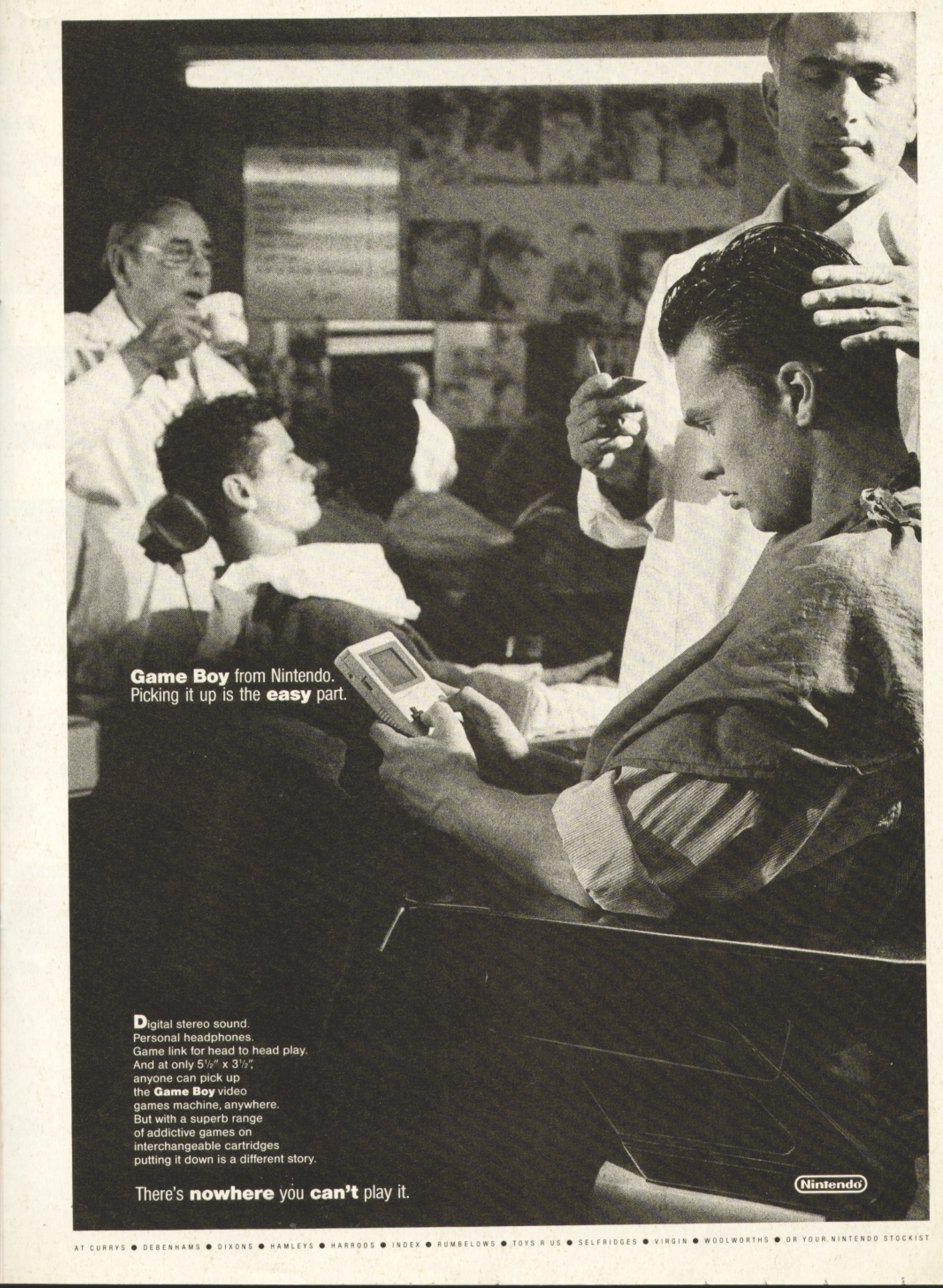
Even controlling your ship is a worthy challenge, and collecting all the objects has you hooked immediately!

LASTABILITY 92%

Loads of levels to conquer, add to that the brilliant gameplay and you've got a game that'll last for months!

OVERALL 94%

One of the greatest NES titles we've seen this year. For sheer enjoyment, buy it - you won't regret it!



Game Boy from Nintendo.
Picking it up is the **easy** part.
Digital stereo sound.
Personal headphones.
Game link for head to head play.
And at only 5½" x 3½",
anyone can pick up
the **Game Boy** video
games machine, anywhere.
But with a superb range
of addictive games on
interchangeable cartridges
putting it down is a different story.
There's **nowhere** you **can't** play it.
Nintendo
AT CURRYS ● DEBENHAMS ● DIXONS ● HAMLEYS ● HARRODS ● INDEX ● RUMBELOWS ● TOYS R US ● SELFRIDGES ● VIRGIN ● WOOLWORTHS ● OR YOUR NINTENDO STOCKIST

BLADE OF STEE

This may sound like some kind of slash 'em up Swords 'n' Sorcery type game, but beneath the slightly ambiguous title lies a Nintendo version of the classic game of mindless, rink-bound violence - Ice Hockey.

The object is simple. At each end of the rink lies a goal and the objective is to hit the puck into the opposition's goal. Not surprisingly, the opposing team want to do exactly the same thing, so expect plenty of midfield malarkey before the serious goal-scoring begins. There are three rounds of ten minutes before the final whistle is called.

Before you even hit the ice, a number of game options have to be sorted out. You can enter your team into either a complete league or just a single exhibition match. Then it's off to choose which skill level you wish to play at (junior, college, or professional) and what team you actually wish to play as.

After that, it's down to your five on-screen hockey heroes and your joypad skills to save the day!

Ice rink hilarity as the team puck off!

JOLLY HOCKEY STICKS!

Control of your players couldn't be easier. The joypad controls the player closest to the puck while the buttons are used to control the type of shot. Two types are on offer. A simple passing shot using button B sends the puck along to the nearest player, whilst button A attempts a shot at the opposing goal - wherever you are on the field!



COMMENT

MATT

Blades of Steel is fun, fun, fun! Control of your on-screen team is simple and effective and complicated strings of hockey moves can be handled with ease! The action is fast and incredibly furious (with a beat 'em up element thrown in for good measure!) and the graphics, although a bit flickery at times are for the most part well-detailed with decent animation. Lastability is perhaps questionable, but with the terrific two-player mode there's no excuse not to puck off - now!



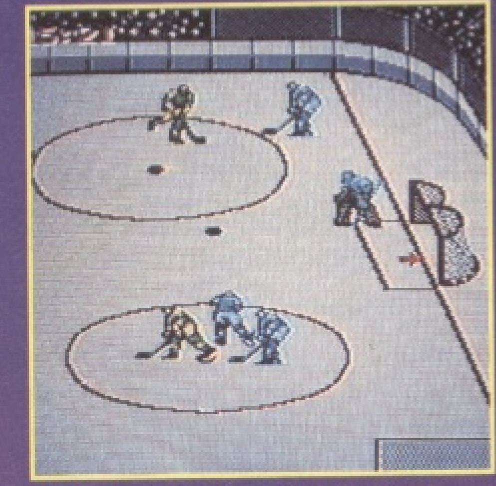
Edmonton trounch Toronto by a massive fifteen points!



An open goal if ever there was o







▲ Can you "Spot the Puck"?

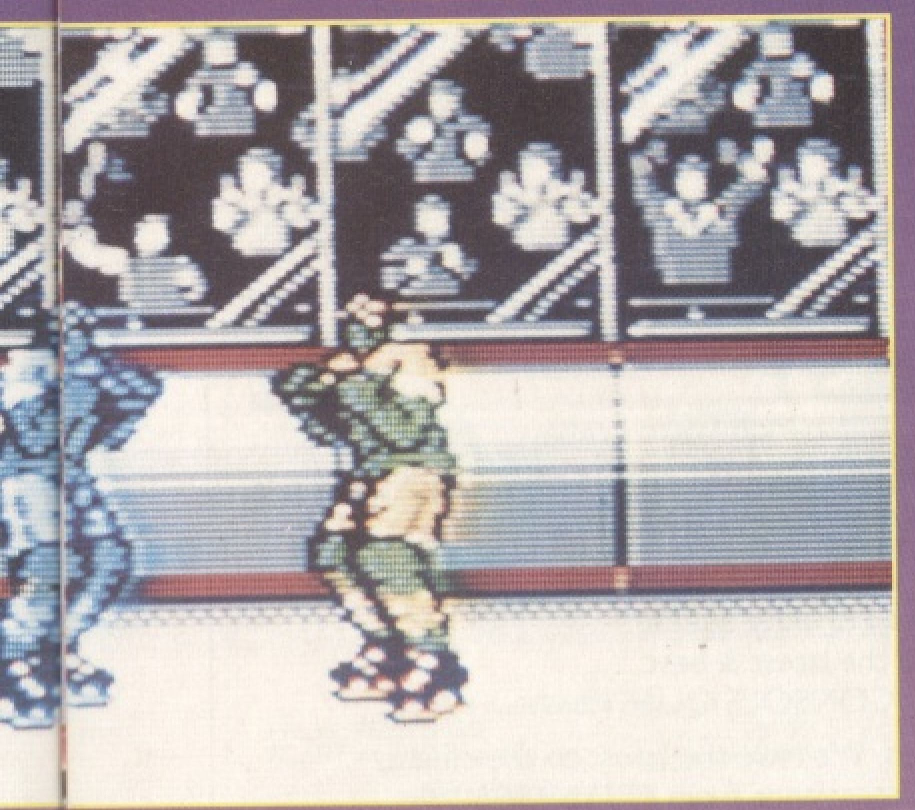
BEAT 'EM UP TACTICS

A fair amount of violence is involved in normal hockey - but in Blades of Steel gratuitous and unprovoked attack is necessary for victory! When you attempt to pinch the puck from the opposition the action cuts to a one-on-one beat 'em up section. Possession of the puck is secured by beating the seven shades out of your opponent!

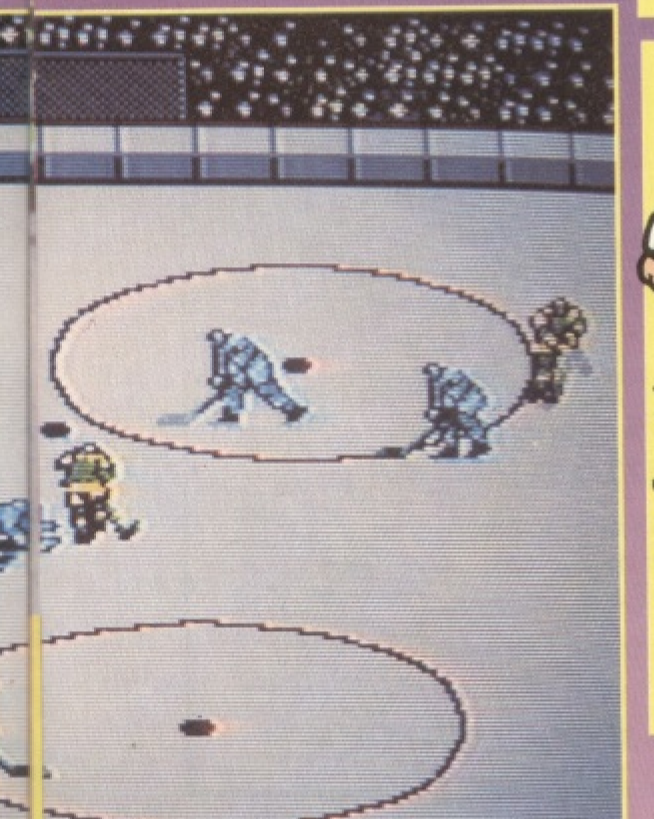


OFF-RINK OPTIONS

The actual gameplay in Blades of Steel is pretty limited, so it's a good thing that Konami has thrown in so many different options and settings to keep you occupied. As well as choosing which team you actually wish to play as, in the exhibition matches you can even choose your opposition. Eight top teams are featured in Blades of Steel namely: New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Montreal, Toronto, Edmonton, Vancouver and Minnesota. There's also a two-player mode included so you can face up to your best friend on the rink!



one!



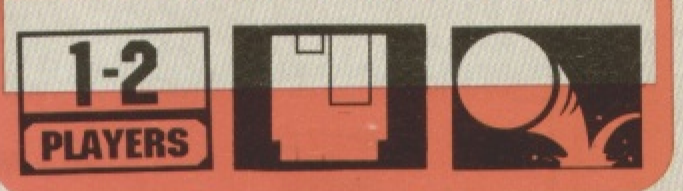
COMMENT

Ah! The swish of skates against ice. The thwack of stick against puck. The thump of fist against head! This certainly is ice hockey! As with all sports simulations, the action is best appreciated with two-players (just make sure the violence happens on the screen and not off it), but that's not to say Blades of Steel is dull one-player game! With its multiple skill levels and different options, there's plenty of variety to keep a lonesome player happy. Ice hockey doesn't sound like really rivetting subject matter for a console game, but this is a thoroughly enjoyable sports simulation which will keep you coming back to your Nintendo time and time again.

JULIAN



BY: KONAMI
PRICE: £34.99
RELEASE DATE: DEC
GAME DIFFICULTY: EASY/MED
LIVES: N/A
CONTINUES: N/A
SKILL LEVELS: 3
RESPONSIVENESS: SMOOTH



PRESENTATION 82%
Plenty of attractive presentation screens to keep you interested.

GRAPHICS 78%
Nice, speedy scrolling with detailed sprites and decent animation.

SOUND 71%
Not bad at all, with a variety of suitable spot effects.

PLAYABILITY 84%
Playing ice hockey has never been so much fun! Control of the team is simple and effective.

LASTABILITY 76%
The simple nature of the game may prove to be its downfall, but the two-player mode will have you digging out the cart months from now!

OVERALL 79%
A fine ice hockey simulation that's well worth checking out.

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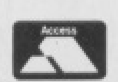
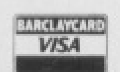
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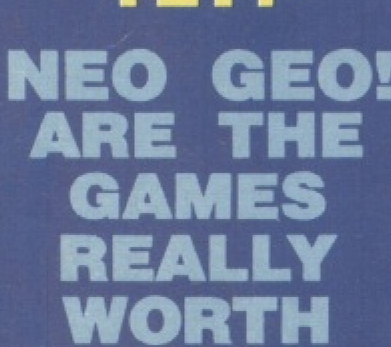
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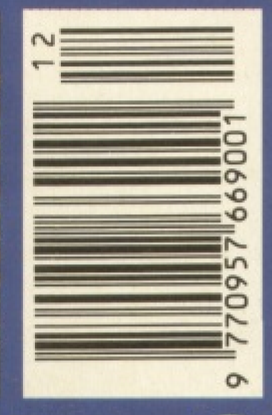
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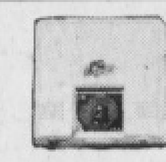
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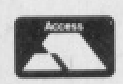
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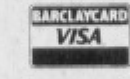
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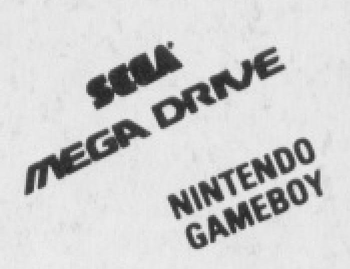
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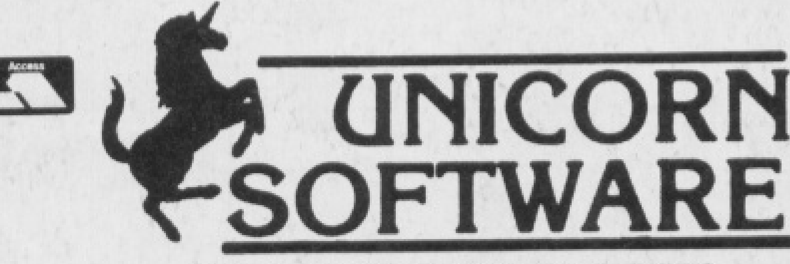
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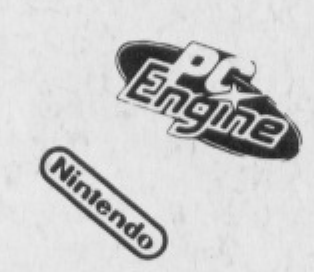


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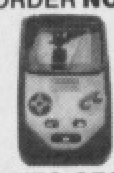
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▲ The revs build as the car zooms around the track.





If you've ever wanted the chance to drive a Formula I car in a Grand Prix, here's your chance in this stunning conversion of the super Sega racing coin-op.

Not only does Super Monaco GP include a completely faithful conversion of the arcade game, there's an option that lets you challenge other top drivers in a complete Grand Prix season - but more of that later.

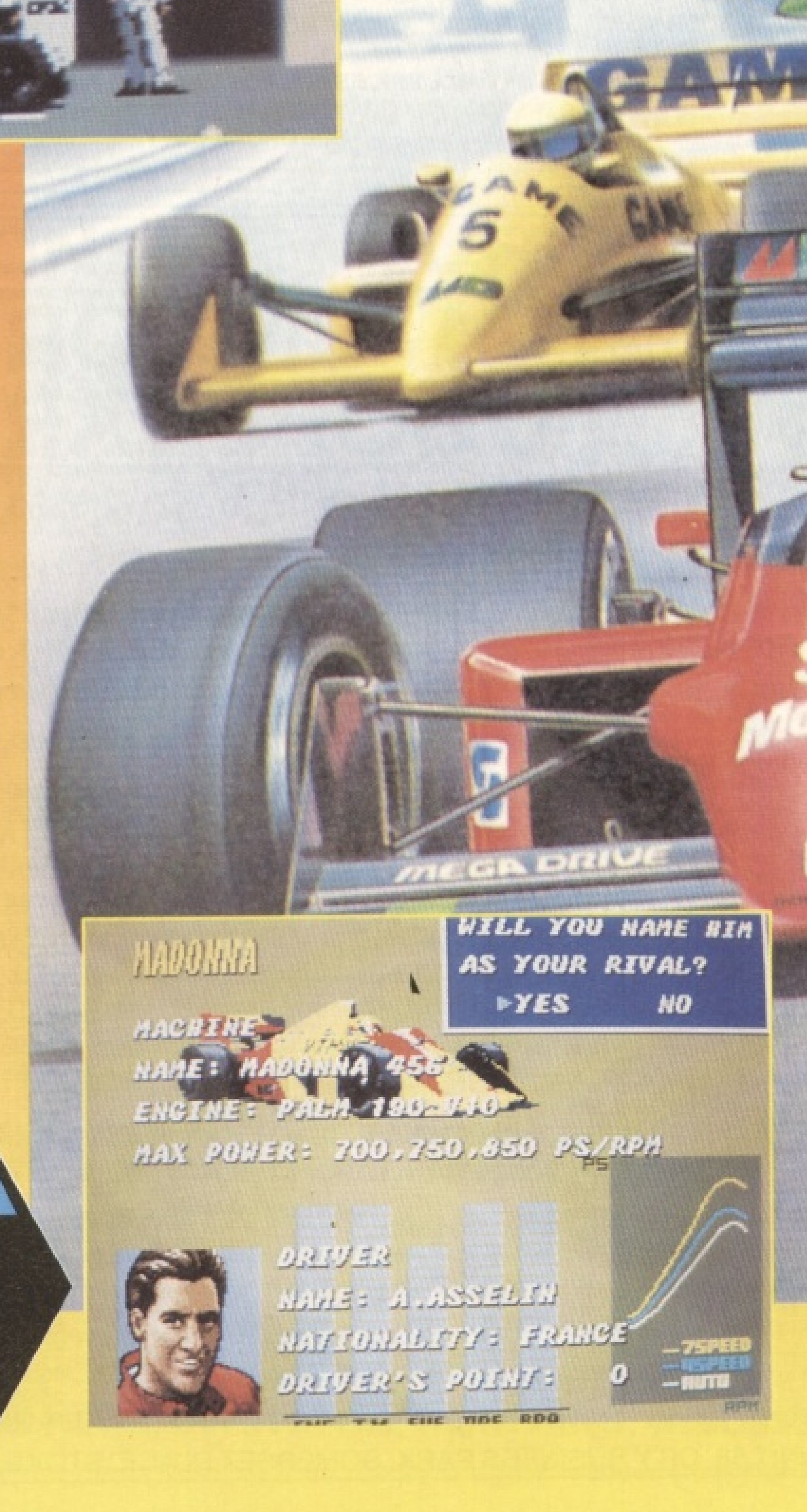
If you choose the arcade mode, you're given the choice of three cars - auto, 3-speed and 7-speed, which increase in power but are more difficult to drive respectively.

Once that's done it's time to race a qualifying lap - the faster you do it, the better your grid position. The race itself is set over three laps, and you've simply got to stay ahead of the opposition to keep in the race. There's a position limit on-screen, and if you fall below that at any time, the race ends. If you're one of the first three across the finishing line, you get the chance to race again in wet conditions!

The World Circuit mode gives you the chance to race against other drivers over an entire Grand Prix season. All the world's most famous courses are included, and you've got to race around them all and out-perform other drivers to win the Grand Prix at the end of the season.

CHALLENGE A DRIVER

At any time during a season, you can choose to challenge another top driver. There's a huge list of different, almost familiar-sounding names to choose from, and they range from poor to professional. See who you can beat!



Techie specs ahoy! ▶





COMMENT



MATT

Racing a Formula I car is a dream for all the MEAN MACHINES team (Jaz has driven a Formula III car, the lucky so-and-so), and this game lets us relieve our urges. I am amazed at this game every time I load it, the graphics are so good. Luckily, it doesn't stop at just being visually resplendent: the playability is incredible, and the sprite update has to be seen to be believed. Atmosphere is what makes this so special, and the sweat really starts to pour as you view three cars approaching in you rear-view mirror - will you be able to keep them at bay? Easily the best racing game on any console, this game combines excitement and quality in a fun, cuddly package!

MEGA GAME



▲ *Lose one more place and you're out of the running.*



ENGINE SPECIFICATIONS

3.5L NA V10 (SG3264E)

DEVELOPED BY SEGA

7 SPEED
4 SPEED
AUTOMATIC

TRY A NEW TEAM

During a racing season, if you're winning lots of races and generally proving that you're a rather talented driver, you might be invited to join a top racing team. The benefits of this are top status amongst other drivers, plus you'll get a very powerful car with which to burn off the opposition.

THE CARS

There are three different types of car to choose in Super Monaco GP. Each has a different transmission and power output.



AUTO: Has an automatic gearbox so you don't have to worry about changing gear. But it suffers from a lack of power compared with manually geared cars.



4-SPEED: Fairly easy to drive, with four gears to hassle you about while you zoom around. The car has medium power.



7-SPEED: The fastest racing car available, but has an enormous seven gears. This one's for pro drivers only.

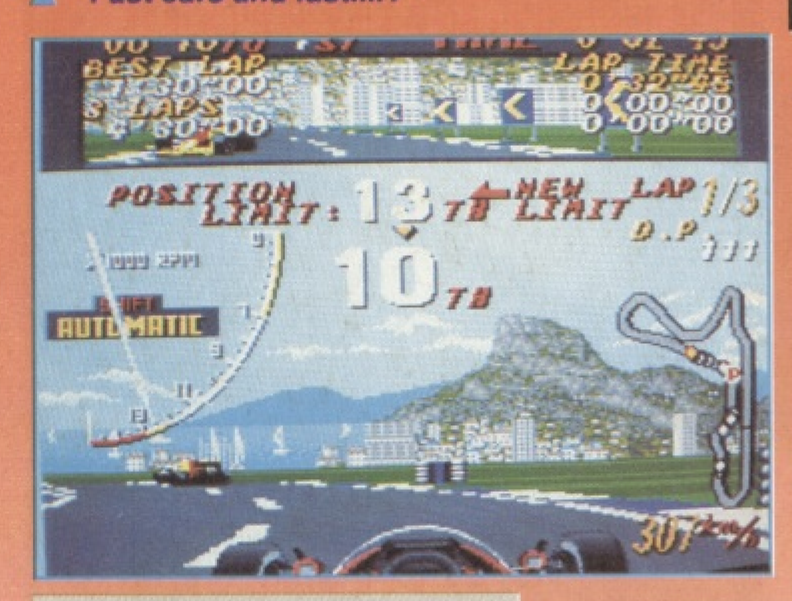
▼ *Thanks, chums!*





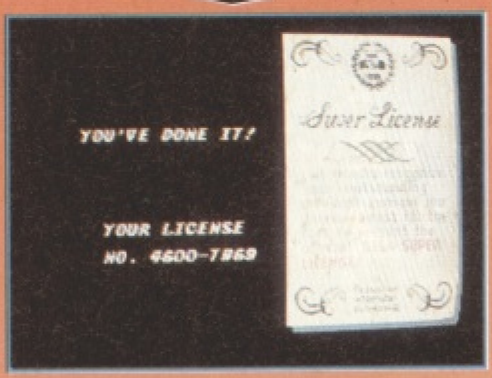


Fast cars and fast....?



SUPER LICENCE

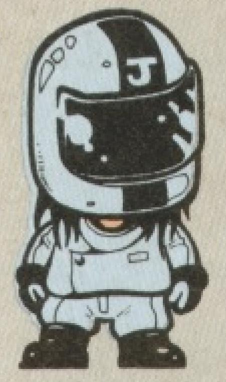
The way to get the highest scores is to complete both the Super Monaco races. You're awarded points according to your starting position on the grid, the speed you travel and whether or not you're ahead of the opposition. A good player should be able to score over 4200 points! However, if you manage to score over 4500 points, the Sega Super Licence is displayed on-screen to acknowledge your outstanding gamesmanship! See if you can get it!



A car's right behind, so keep it up (oo-er).

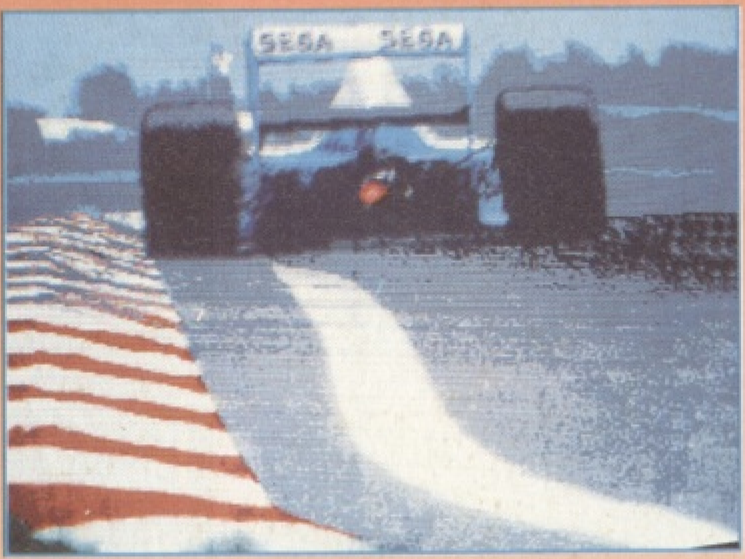
The pretty opening sequence.

COMMENT



JULIAN

Racing games don't come any faster or slicker than this. The arcade mode is missing some of the big roadside features like the buildings that appeared in the coin-op, but it doesn't really matter since they're unnecessary to the actual game. The action is amazingly fast, and the 3D is both smooth and completely convincing. The World Circuit option adds massive lasting appeal, with a full season to race and other drivers to challenge - and even if you win the Grand Prix, you can return to the game to see if you can break all your lap records. Super Monaco GP is an utterly superb racing game which is a must for your collection - start saving now and you should be able to afford it when it's released at the end of January.



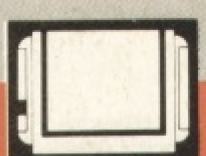
Hit too many other cars, and your racer starts to fall apart.





BY: SEGA
PRICE: £34.99
RELEASE DATE: JAN
GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM
LIVES: N/A
CONTINUES: 0
SKILL LEVELS: 3
RESPONSIVENESS: ACE







PRESENTATION 92%

Superb presentation screens, and a wealth of options.

GRAPHICS 92%

Fast and thoroughly convincing 3D makes this one of the most realistic driving games around.

SOUND 85%

Good tunes and atmospheric stereo spot effects - wear your headphones when you play!

PLAYABILITY 95%

Easy to get into, and once you start racing it's very difficult to stop.

LASTABILITY 90%

Multiple cars and skill levels maintain the challenge - and the World Circuit will keep you coming back for more.

OVERALL 93%

A fast and utterly thrilling race game - one of the best you'll play on any home machine.


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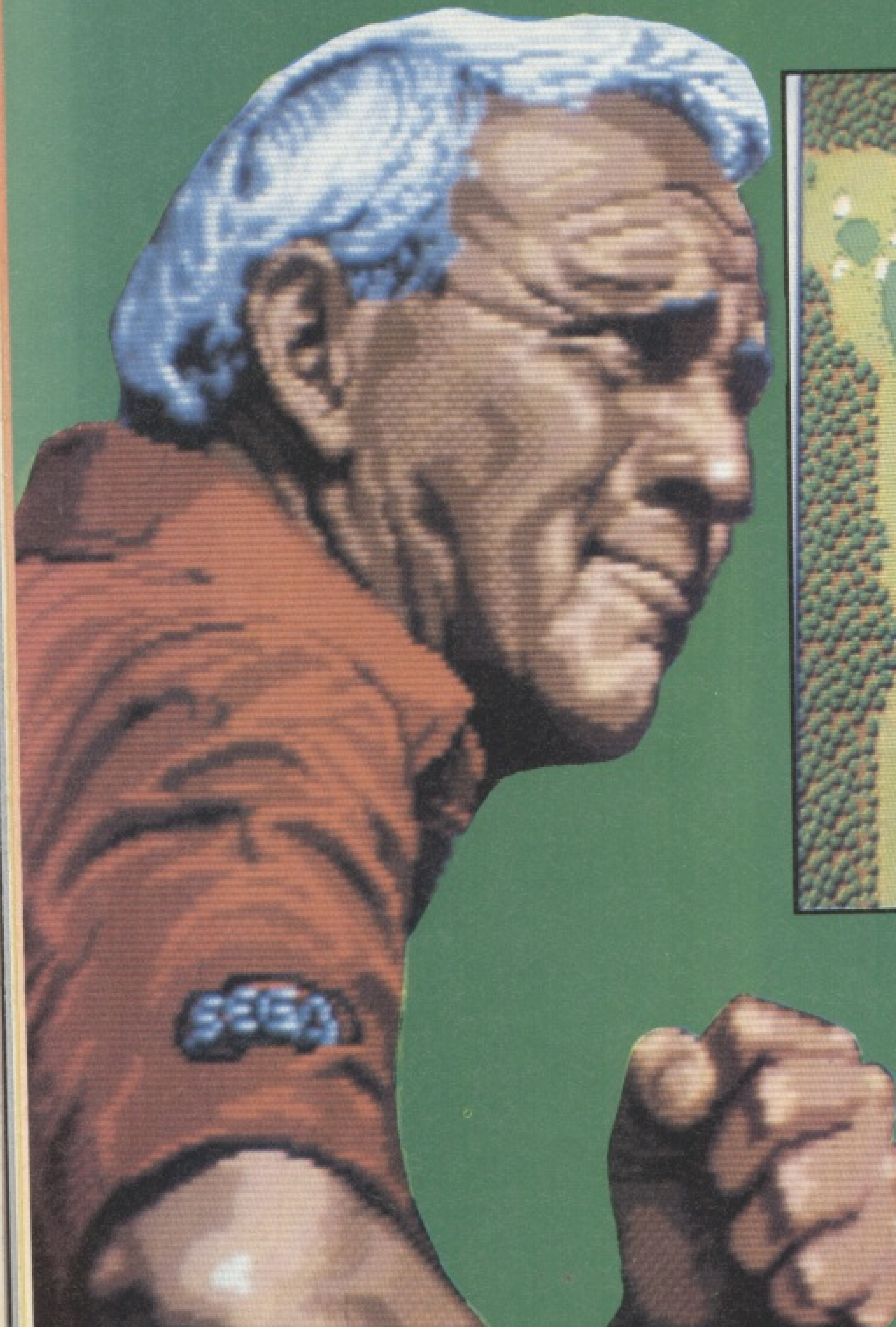
ARNOLD PALMER GOLF

If playing computer games is Japan's national past-time, golf must be a close second. Hardly similar events, but their obsession knows no bounds. Arnold Palmer, the American pro player, has endorsed this simulation of the sport. But don't worry - you don't have to wear checked trousers and a Pringle sweater to play it.

The game centres around a tournament, but practice modes are available - and important if you want to hold your own in the main event. Choose your club, find the leg position that suits you best, check the wind strength and direction, and make your stroke. This is achieved by pressing the button once to start the backstroke, pressing again at the top of the swing, and a third time to connect with the ball, and determine the amount of chip or slice put on the ball.

The choice of club is paramount: choose a wood when only 80 yards from the green and the ball goes sailing into the woods - or off a cliff, as some of the courses are in very strange locations indeed!

Not a game that is easily mastered, Arnold Palmer's Golf requires a lot of practice and perseverance. But it certainly is pretty....





A BIT OF ROUGH

Sooner or later, and probably sooner, a shot will go astray and land in the rough. If this is just the surrounding area of the fairway, it's usually easy to chip the ball back on course. However if it lands in the trees, things can get tough. Oddly enough, the ball won't travel through solid wood, so it's necessary to rotate until the way is clear. Unfortunately, you can't cheat by quietly kicking your ball out of the woods!





OLD
ER'S
LF

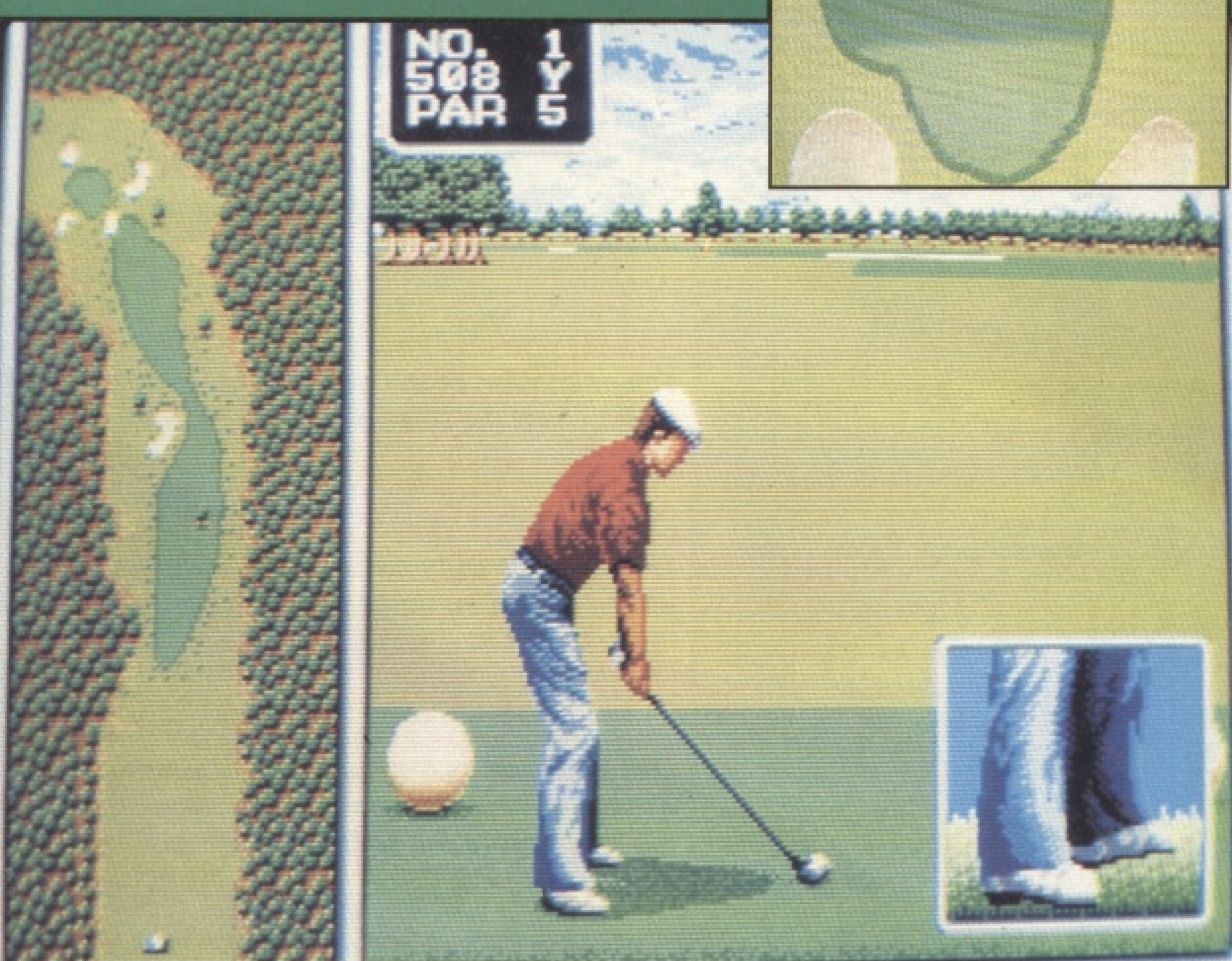
COMMENT



MATT

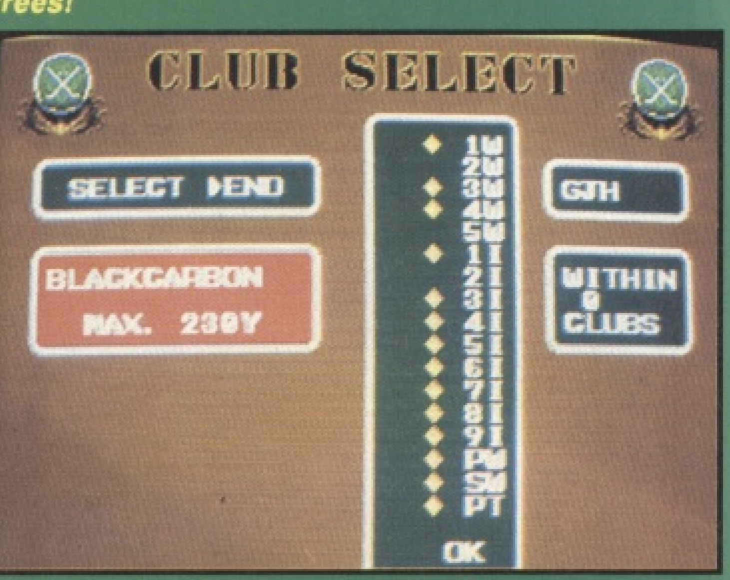
Nintendo golf was always one of the highlights of the machine with its variable wind, clubs, and shot strength. Arnold Palmer's Golf is very much in the same tradition, but with greatly improved graphics (although the music's diabolical). It offers a stiff challenge, with testing courses; like any sporting game, though, it's much better with two players. I don't think this takes the genre that much further than the Nintendo game, but it's hugely enjoyable nonetheless. I recommend it to anyone interested in a golf game.

▼ *Shuffle around until you're comfortable with your feet position.*



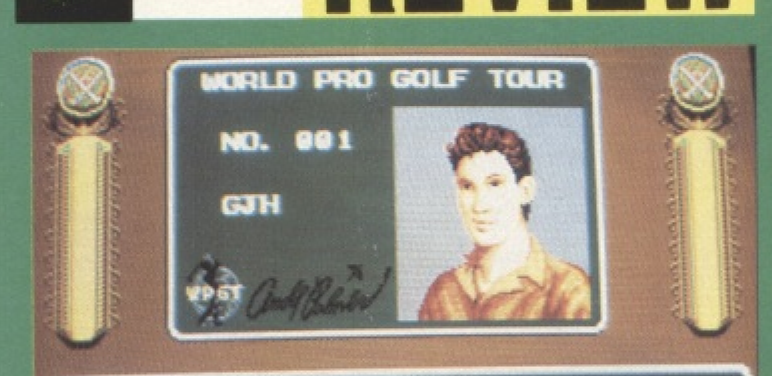


▲ *Fore! Let's hope the ball doesn't land in those trees!*



IN THE CLUB

Choosing the right club for a stroke is vitally important. Try to learn when to use a putting wedge instead of an iron - and when to slice and chip instead of trying a straight shot. Another great option is the chance to have clubs made of different materials: black carbon, fibreglass, and super ceramic clubs are all available. It's up to you to discover the pros and cons of each type!



▲ *Pretty you ain't!*

COMMENT

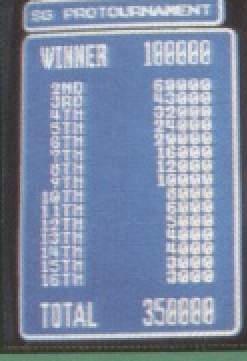


JULIAN

As golf games go, this is a very good example. Using big sprites, convincing graphics and a variety of player moves, this simulates the sport very well. It's pretty tough, especially when you're playing the tournament mode, but there are practice and two-player options to help you get to grips with the rather difficult course. I certainly enjoyed playing the game, and I think that any sports fan will find this both addictive and challenging - and your Dad will absolutely love it!

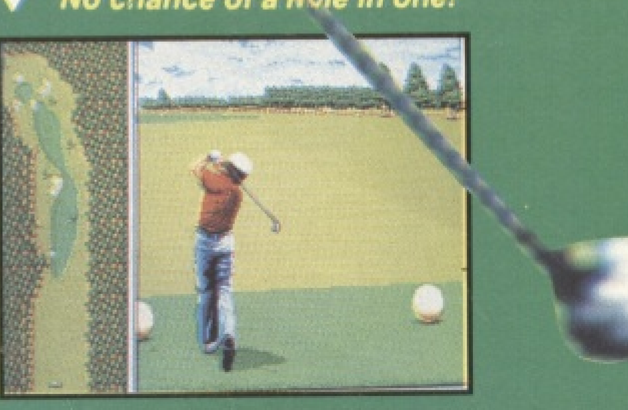


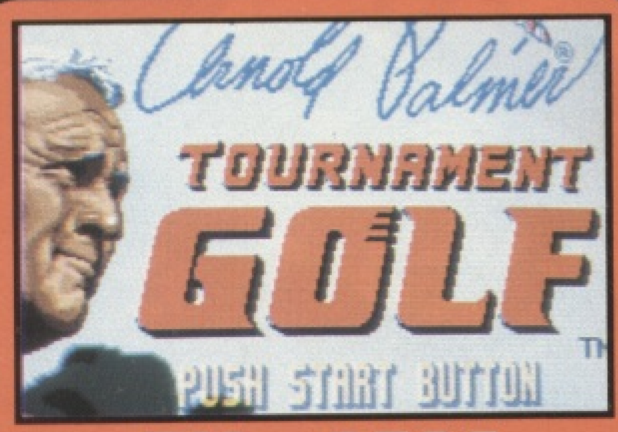
▲ *The bimbo club provides a pleasant distraction.*



▲ *Loadsamoney up for grabs.*

▼ *No chance of a hole in one!*

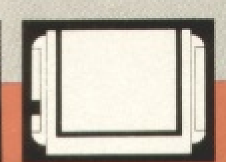




BY: SEGA
PRICE: £34.99

RELEASE DATE: JAN
GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM
LIVES: N/A
CONTINUES: 0
SKILL LEVELS: N/A
RESPONSIVENESS: NOT BAD

1-2 PLAYERS





PRESENTATION 84%
Great piccie of Arnie himself on the title screen, and professional presentation throughout.

GRAPHICS 81%
The animation of the golfers is of a high quality, and the trees are very pretty too!

SOUND 72%
The theme is truly awful, and will drive you up the wall in no time. But the sound effects make up for it.

PLAYABILITY 82%
Once the basics are mastered, it simply becomes a matter of improving the score. It's much more fun with two players.

LASTABILITY 84%
Although it lacks excitement, this game has true staying power, as you'll keep coming back to it to improve your par.

OVERALL 83%
More fun than Bruce Forsyth, better looking than Tarby, and more strokes than Cecil Parkinson.

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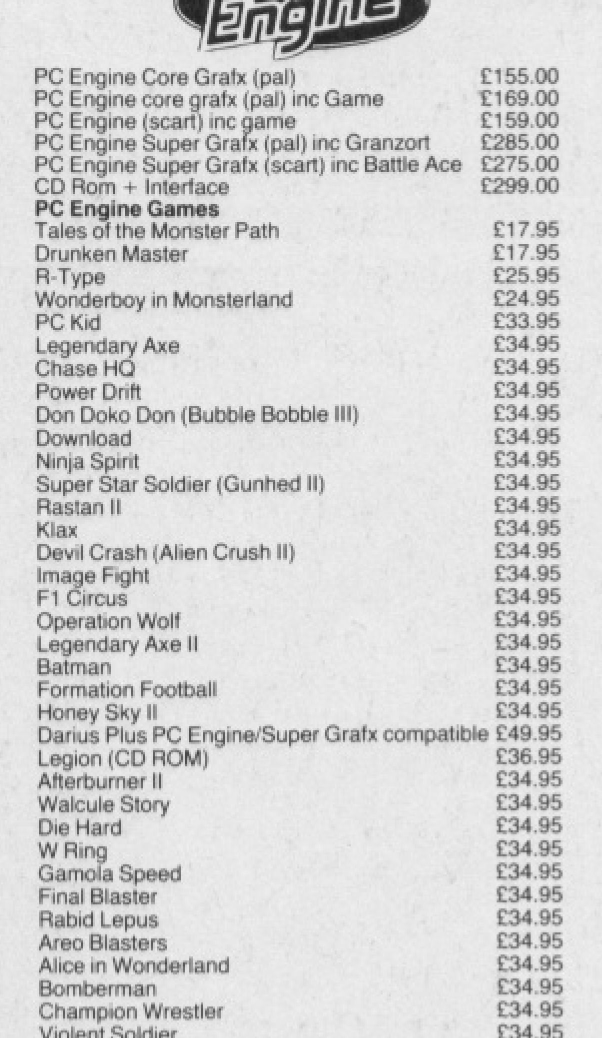
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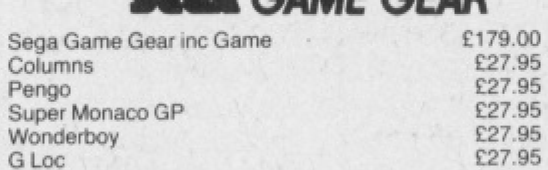
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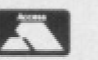
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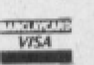
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TOP 10 CHARTS



MEGADRIVE

1	◀	GOLDEN AXE
2	◀	REVENGE SHINOBI
3	NE	POPULOUS
4	▲	FORGOT'N WORLDS
5	RE	GHOULS 'N GHOSTS
6	▲	MYSTIC DEFENDER
7	NE	BUDOKAN
8	◀	SUPER HANG-ON
9	▼	THUNDERBLADE
10	▼	TRUXTON

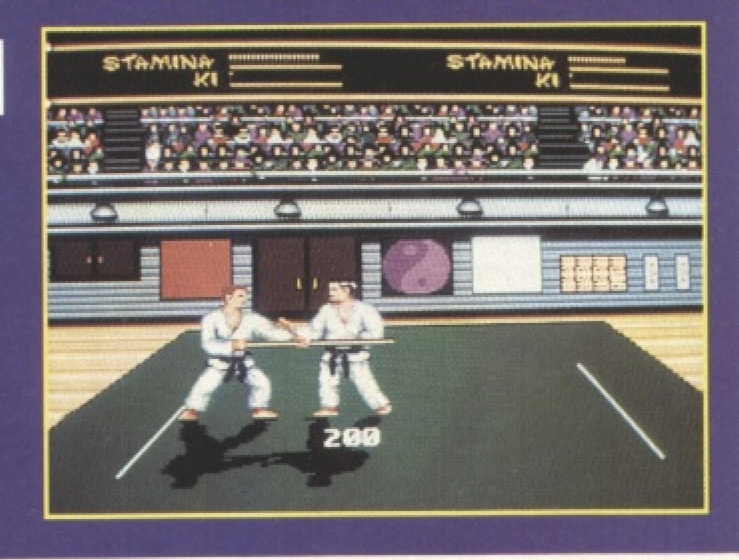




▲ *Forgotten Worlds - still climbing!*

MEGADRIVE

Golden Axe remains top dog in the Megadrive chart for a third month, holding Shinobi and Forgotten Worlds back. The highest new entry is Populous at number three - a brilliant game that'll no doubt continue to sell by the bucket-load. Budokan is the other Electronic Arts game to make a strong showing, and Ghosts 'n' Goblins has finally appeared, propping up the very strong top five. Mystic Defender has somehow managed to climb - who's buying it? Thunderblade's on the way out, and Truxton is slipping fast.

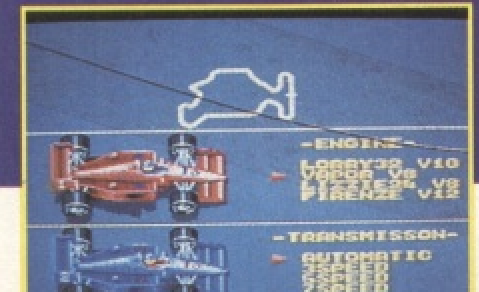


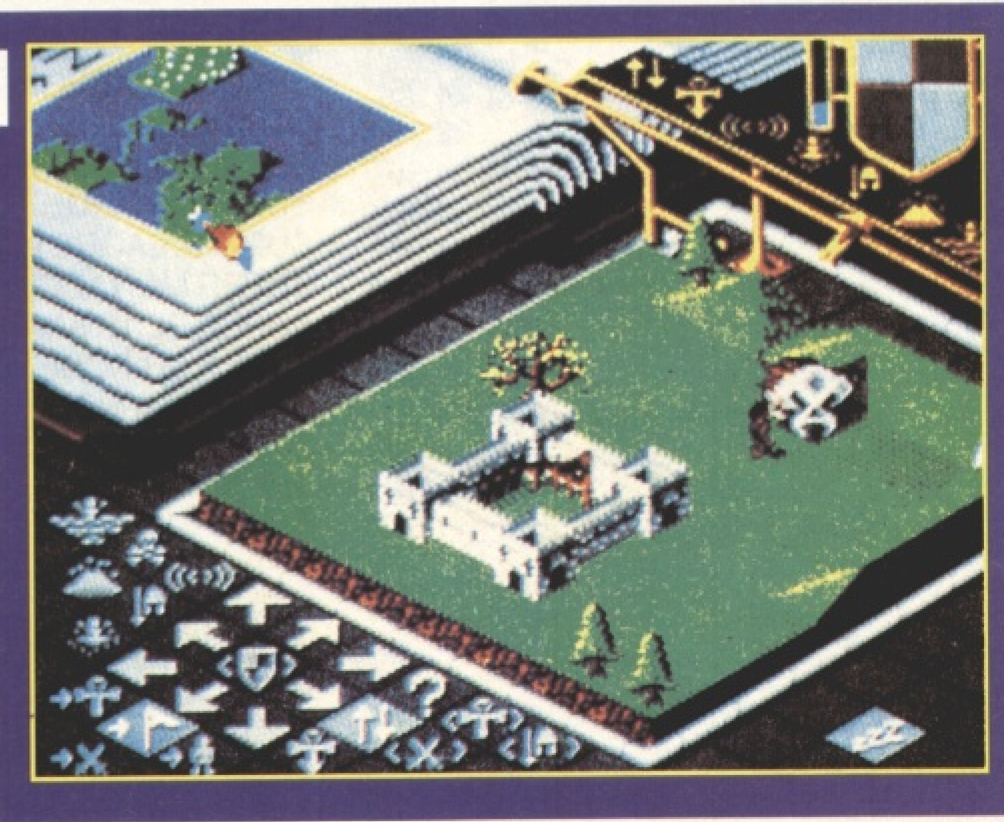


PREDICTIONS

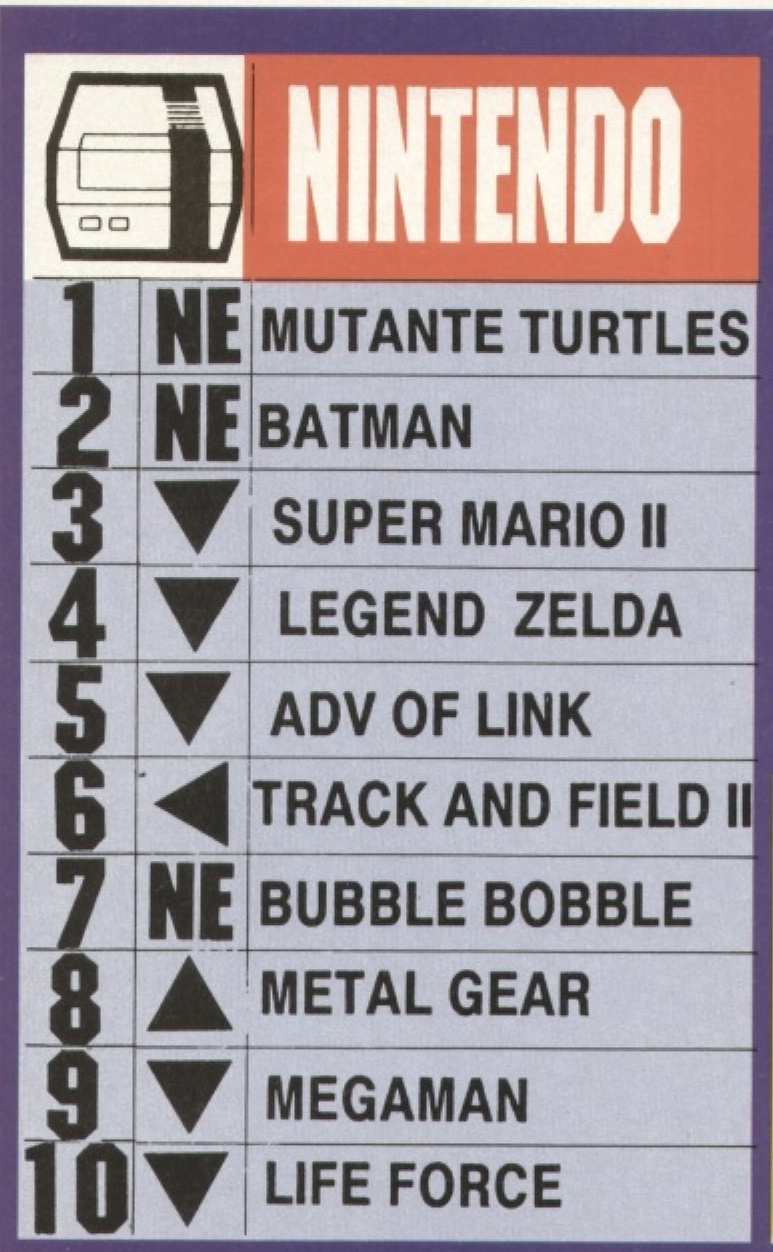
MEGADRIVE: Populous
SEGA: Super Monaco GP
NINTENDO: Turtles (again!)







ALL FORMATS

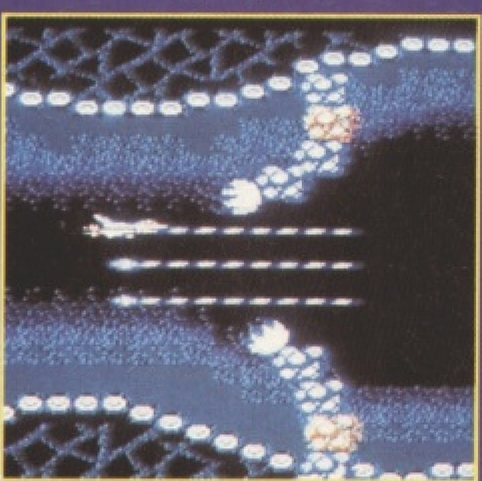


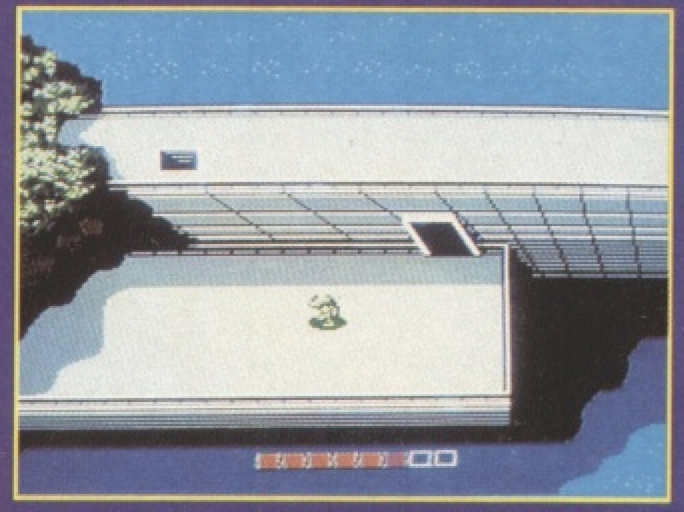
NINTENDO

1	NE	MUTANTE TURTLES
2	NE	BATMAN
3	▼	SUPER MARIO II
4	▼	LEGEND ZELDA
5	▼	ADV OF LINK
6	◄	TRACK AND FIELD II
7	NE	BUBBLE BOBBLE
8	▲	METAL GEAR
9	▼	MEGAMAN
10	▼	LIFE FORCE

NINTENDO

Hurrah! After two months of near non-movement, the Nintendo chart now has a new look. The Turtles zoom in to the number one slot with their impressive game - not surprising really, closely followed by another hot licence, Batman (which is reviewed elsewhere in this issue). Super Mario II drops, as does Zelda and Link - but the original Super Mario Bros has disappeared entirely! Bubble Bobble hits the charts this month - the rest are static or dropping down.





▲ *Turtles - straight in at number one!*



▲ *Bubble Bobble - new entry at number eight!*

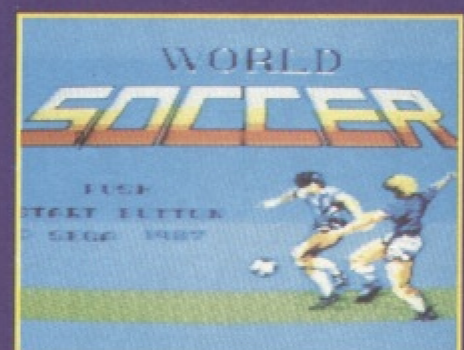


SEGA

1	◄	GOLDEN AXE
2	◄	CHASE HQ
3	◄	OPERATION WOLF
4	▲	DOUBLE DRAGON
5	▼	BATTLE OUTRUN
6	NE	WONDERBOY III
7	NE	WORLD SOCCER
8	NE	NINJA
9	NE	CALIFORNIA GAMES
10	▼	GOLFMANIA

SEGA

The Sega chart this month has an odd look this month. The top three stay exactly the same, and Double Dragon and Battle Outrun simply swap positions. Wonderboy III starts its inexorable rise to the top, while Enduro Racer, Galaxy Force and RC Grand Prix drop out of the chart. Ninja will no doubt climb further, but how long will California Games remain in the chart?



▲ *World Cup - new in at seven.*





▲ *Double Dragon is rising slowly.*



▲ *California Games is still there.*





There's something strange in the neighbourhood, and someone's called the Ghostbusters - the only ones who can save the city from an epidemic of spooks and ghoulies. Three of the four heroes are here: Raymond, Egon, and Peter, and each has his own strengths and weaknesses.

The object is to clear each level by catching rogue ghosts, which earns cash rewards with which to buy more equipment and weapons. Bombs, for instance, are a must; as the characters only have a couple to start with, it's worth purchasing more so those nasties can be blown sky-high!

The 'Busters can crouch, jump, and fire to get through the hordes of spirits. Each level is ended with the obligatory major baddie, whose weak spot must be discovered and exploited.

Next up is a section where the hero attempts to grab a ghost with his positron-collider gun and trap it in a ghost trap. This is tricky, as the ghost doesn't stay still - and it has to be zapped very near the trap.



▲ *Damn that monster's eyes! Ooops! Too late.*



▲ *We're in the money! We're in the money!*



GHOSTBU

THE FILMS

1984 saw the release of Ghostbusters, the spoof action movie starring Dan Ackroyd, Bill Murray, and Harold Ramis. The knockabout comedy, excellent effects, and catchy theme music made it an instant hit both here and in the States. The sequel was released last Christmas but was not nearly as popular, despite the presence of Sigourney Weaver once again.







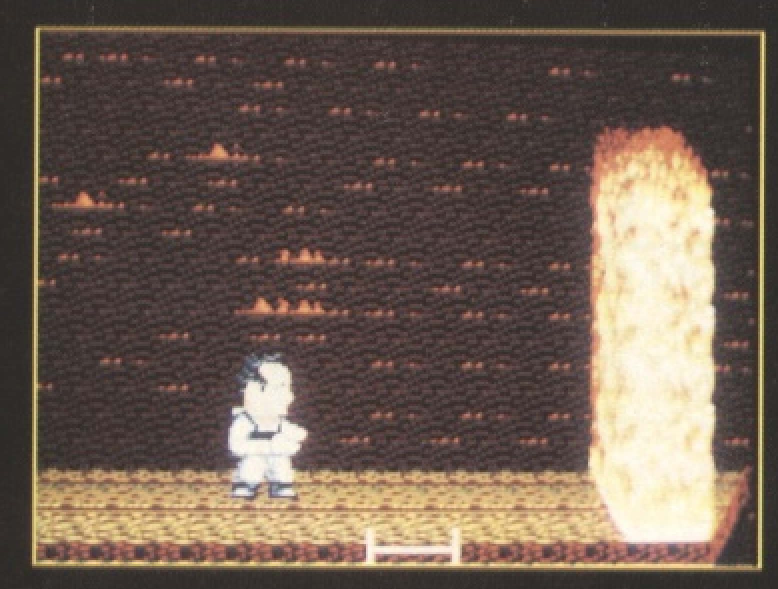




▲ Here's New York, where there are lots of ghosts to bust.



▲ Aaagh no! It's the Mr Staypuft the marshmallow Man!



▲ Hey guys, pass me the marshmallows!

USTERS



COMMENT



MATT

The whole Ghostbusters phenomenon seems rather stale and boring these days, and I'm afraid the game suffers in the same fashion. It has its good points - I like the graphical style, and the intro screens are rather attractive. However, the gameplay is too limited to make this an essential Megadrive purchase: jumping around zapping cute spooks soon becomes a little boring. Still. there are some neat touches in there, such as the two shops that let you increase your options, and a pleasant reproduction of the theme music. Despite these factors, however, I can't honestly recommend this game.



GHOSTLY GOODIES

When you kill some ghosts, they drop cash which can be picked up and spent in the shops that you can enter between levels. There are a variety of extra things to buy - here are the best of them.



3-WAY CANNON: The best low-priced weapon available and it only costs 7000 credits.

BOMB: Cheap and reasonably effective. Good against normal baddies, but rubbish against end-of-level guardians.





SUPER SHIELD: The ultimate weapon. But it costs a wallet-bustin' 35000 credits. Gives complete protection for 15 seconds.

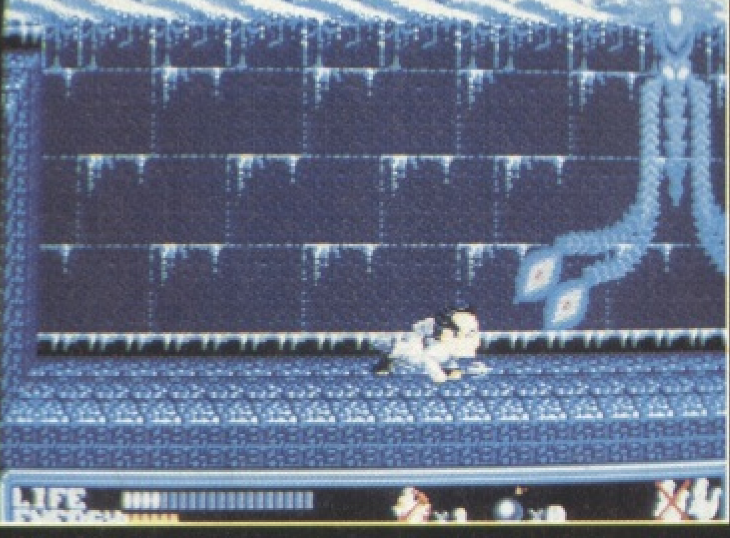
FLAMER: A powerful gun that fires slow bolts of flame. Best suited for use on slow, inanimate foes.



CRAZY FURNITURE







▲ *Crawl underneath the tentacles or die!*

COMMENT



JULIAN

Unlike Matt, I enjoyed Ghostbusters a lot. It's pretty tough at first, as you need to work out each wacky baddie's weak spot to destroy it, but once you get used to the rather strange methods involved, ghost bustin' becomes an enjoyable and rewarding experience. There are plenty of humorous touches, like the magical moving furniture and some very weird end-of-level baddies - I love the ghoulie with the huge ghostie in his hat! With its excellent cartoon-style graphics and some great tunes, Ghostbusters is a neat platform/shoot 'em up which should appeal to Ghostbusters fans.

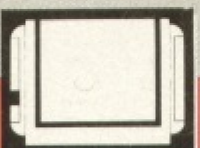


BY: SEGA

PRICE: £34.99

RELEASE DATE: DEC
GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM
LIVES: 3
CONTINUES: 2
SKILL LEVELS: 3
RESPONSIVENESS: OK







PRESENTATION 84%
A good intro sequence and plenty of options.

GRAPHICS 84%
Cute, and highly detailed cartoon-style graphics - some of the baddies are superb. The backgrounds are weak, though.

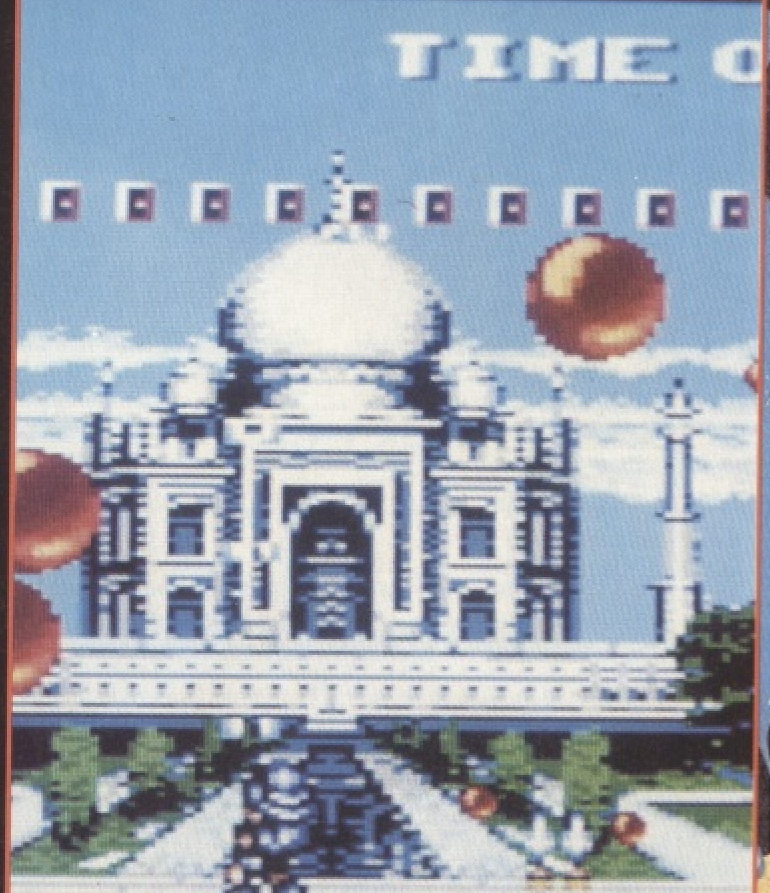
SOUND 83%
Spot effects are adequate, and the 'Busters theme is accurate.

PLAYABILITY 82%
Nicely balanced difficulty level makes this very easy to get into.

LASTABILITY 75%
Rather simple, but challenging gameplay provides plenty of fun - but it won't keep you occupied for months.

OVERALL 80%
A fairly enjoyable licence which should appeal most to platform fanatics.



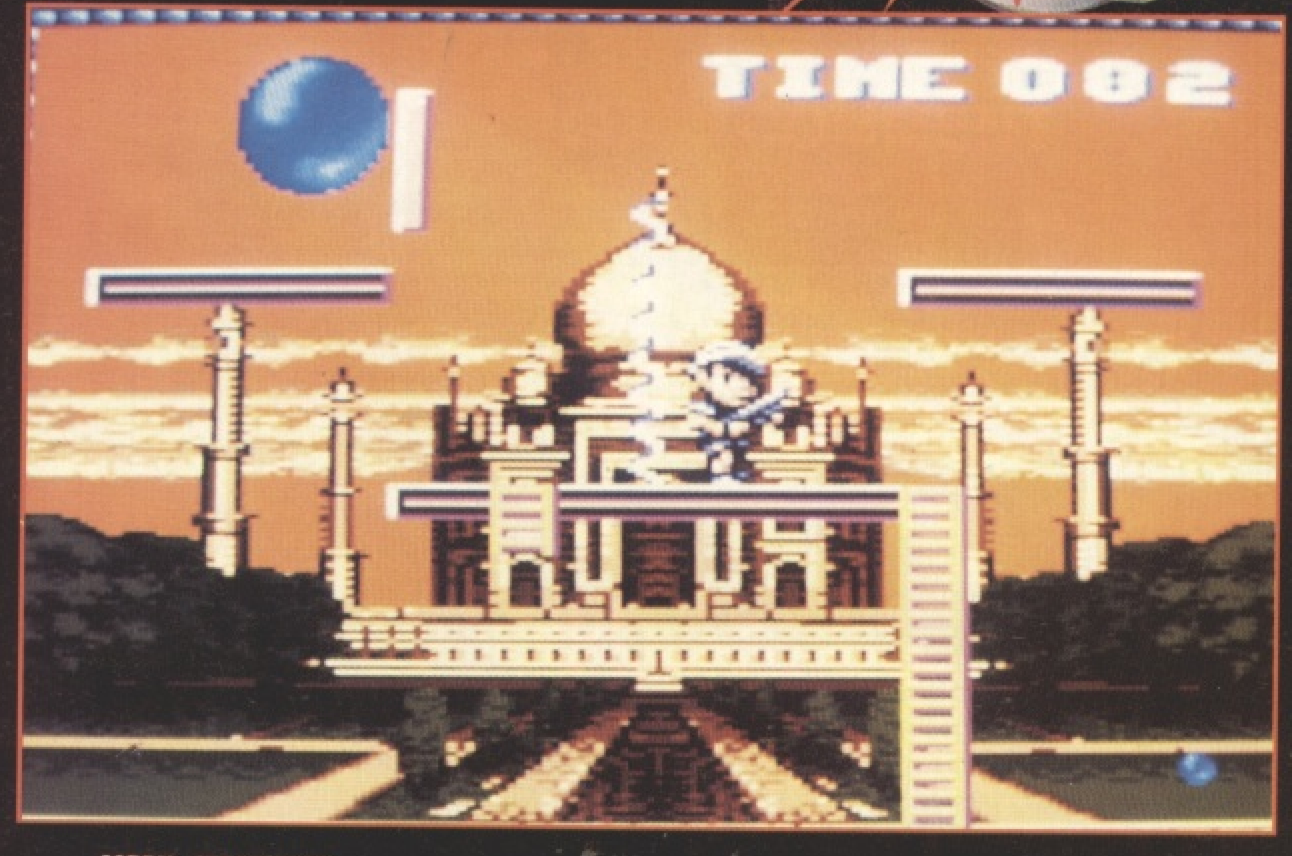


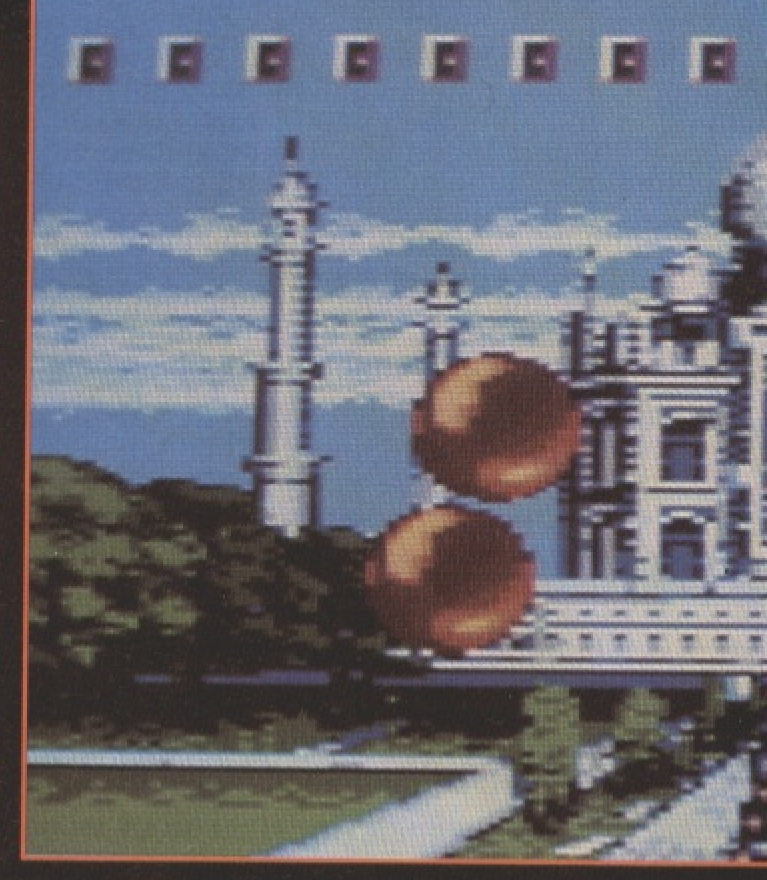
Blasting bubbles may not sound like the most exciting of pastimes, but when you're a professional globe-trotting bubble blitzer, it's all you can think of. And that's what you've got to do in Pang, a conversion of the wacky Mitchell coin-op.

You (plus a friend, if playing in simultaneous two-player mode) have to travel the world, see the sights, and blast the heck out of loads of bubbles with your trusty harpoon gun before they bounce you into the middle of next week! It's not as easy as you might think - once a bubble is shot, it splits into two smaller bubbles, each of which splits in two even smaller ones!

The odds aren't all against you, as some bubbles release power-ups which give you a better chance to clear the screen. Once all the bubbles are disposed of, it's on to the next part of the world, with even more bubbles!







COMMENT



MATT

Pang has to rate as one of the MEAN MACHINES crew's favourite coin-ops, and the GX4000 version is probably one of the best conversions you'll see on this machine for a long while. Bright colourful sprites, along with some absolutely gorgeous backdrops make the game a joy to watch, let alone play. And the boppy, bouncy music and effects only enhance the game further. My only niggle is that the collision detection is a little unforgiving at times, but with a game that's as addictive and fun to play as this, these things can be overlooked. Pang is a brill game that'll have you hooked from the word go - it's definitely one to get hold of at the first opportunity, mateys!



▲ *Leningrad's bubbles are red - well, what colour would they be?*

▼ *The world is traversed by aeroplane as you clear the levels.*

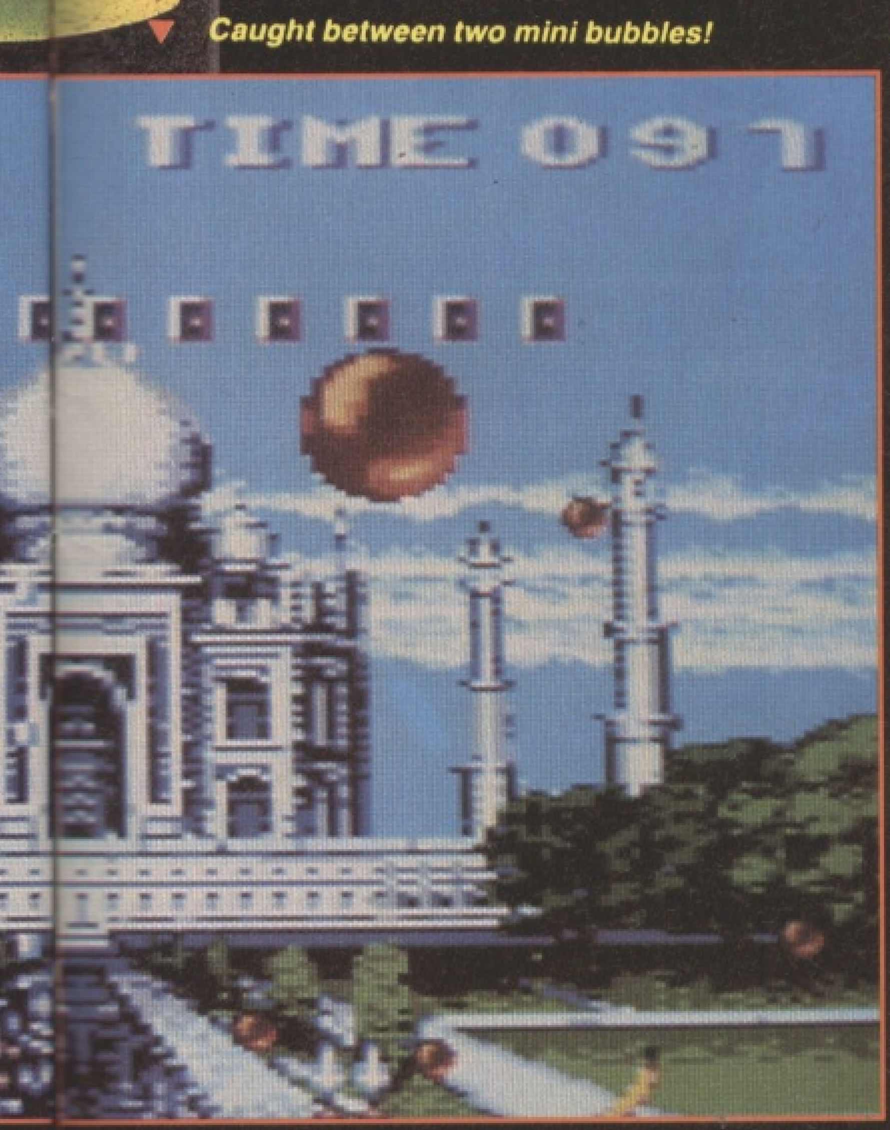


▼ *Caught between two mini bubbles!*





The blocks in Emerald Temple cause some tricky bounces, so watch out! ▲





▲ *Notre Dame looms in the background on the Parisian level.*

IN THE ARCADES

Pang wasn't an astonishing arcade success, but it still picked up a strong following of avid fans. And these people will be pleased to hear that Mitchell are about to release a new coin-op, Super Pang. Following the same basic gameplay, but with different backdrops and even more challenging gameplay, it requires the heroes to once again travel the world and free it from all rogue bubbles! Weird, man...

I'M FOREVER BLASTING BUBBLES

Some of the power-ups are useful, some not so. Here's a list of which to grab and which to avoid...

MAGNETIC CLAMP: Enables the harpoon cable to stick to the ceiling or a platform. The cable then either disappears when a bubble comes into contact with it, or when it's been on screen for a set length of time.



SHOTGUN: Okay for screens with few or no obstacles, but when there are a lot of platforms, leave it well alone.



DYNAMITE: Eeek! This explodes every bubble on screen, turning them all into the smallest variety - which move like the clappers and are dead difficult to avoid!



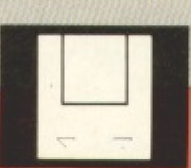
TWIN CABLE: Well handy, because it increases your rate of firepower, giving you more of a chance to hit sneaky smaller bubbles.



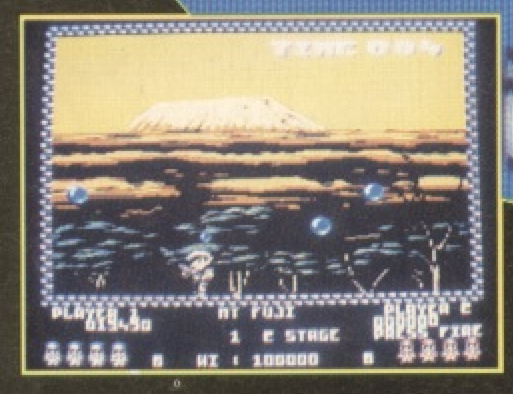


BY: OCEAN
PRICE: £24.99
RELEASE DATE: DEC
GAME DIFFICULTY: EASY/MED
LIVES: 5
CONTINUES: 0
SKILL LEVELS: 1
RESPONSIVENESS: GREAT






▼ *If you clear the screen quickly you get a massive points bonus.*





BADDIE POPPIN'

As well as bubbles to burst, Pang also features a variety of baddies who like to make life difficult. Birds fly around the screen and are shot for bonus points. Crabs sneak around the edge of the playfield and stun you for a second or two, while snails bite your trigger finger so you can't shoot for a limited period of time. Avoid 'em or shoot 'em before they knobble you.


▲ *Deadly danger from bouncing balls outside Parliament.*

COMMENT

JULIAN

Pang is one of those incredibly simple, but amazingly addictive games which once you start playing you just can't stop. Combining detailed and smooth-moving graphics with irresistible gameplay, it's both challenging and enormously enjoyable. I know that bubble bursting doesn't sound particularly thrilling, but the action is fast and gets incredibly hectic, especially if you accidentally pick up the dynamite and end up with a screen full of maniacally bouncing mini-bubbles! On later levels icy floors make life difficult, and the bubbles move faster and faster, requiring much joystick-jiggling and reflex-testing! Pang is easily the best GX4000 title yet seen, and is an absolute must-have if you've got such a machine.

PRESENTATION 80%
A pretty nice still pic between levels, but that's about it.

GRAPHICS 93%
Brilliantly drawn, colourful sprites and backdrops, along with a natty map screen.

SOUND 83%
A jolly, boppy, bubbly sort of title track, along with some popping spot effects.

PLAYABILITY 95%
Instantly playable from the start...

LASTABILITY 91%
...and will have you hooked to your joypad until you've completed it!

OVERALL 93%
A brilliant conversion of a fun coin-op that simply demands purchase.

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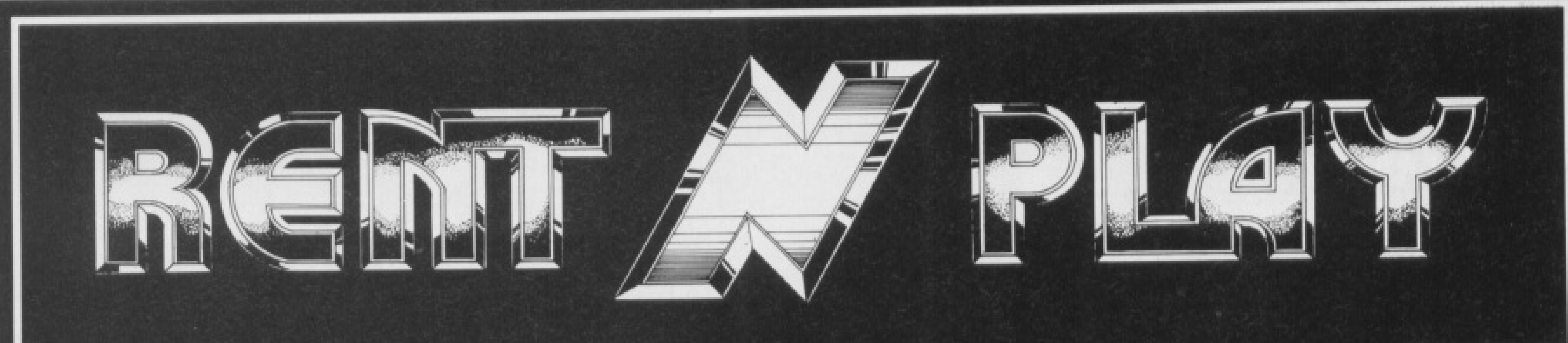
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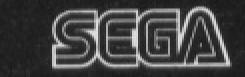




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WORL[D] WRESTL[ING]

Ever fancied dipping your toes into the zany, madcap world of wrestling? Well, with this new Nintendo cart you can do just that, without the need to suddenly eat a massive lard mountain and put on a pair of ill-fitting, gaudy trunks. Tecmo's latest takes you to the USA, where the sport of wrestling has a slightly more theatrical air (indeed, most of the bouts seem to be scripted) and each of the participants seem to be violence-crazed egomaniacs!

First of all, on the one-player game, a wrestler is chosen. After that there is the opportunity to take your muscle-bound mauler to the gym where those pecs can honed to perfection. Then it's into the ring itself where the real business of causing bodily damage to your opponent begins.

The object is pretty straightforward: either to hold down your opponent for the count of three, or beat him into submission!



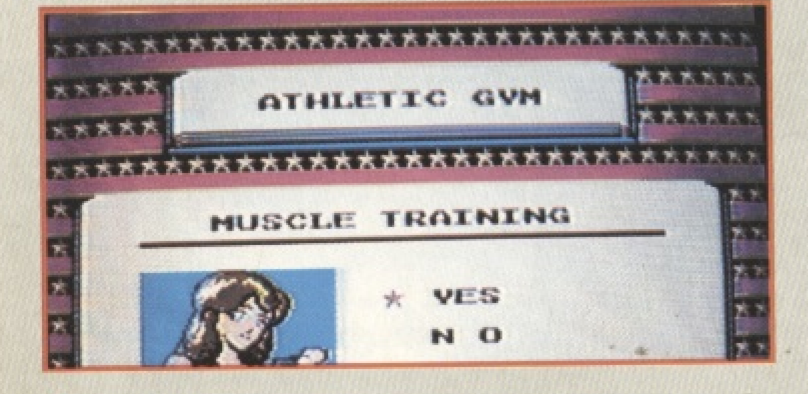
▲ *Oh come on! This is a family magazine!*

COMMENT

MATT

It really disturbs me that such a blatantly violent game can be so fun! World Wrestling's greatest attraction is definitely the amount of moves crammed in. You really feel the pain when your on-screen character is unceremoniously thrown out of the ring and while out for the count mercilessly gets a knee straight in the family jewels! Playing the game in two-player mode is where you have the biggest laffs, as the computer opponents won't really keep you that occupied for long. One to look out for, methinks.

▼ *Impress the chicks with by visiting the gym*





Synchronised breathing with NES wrestling! ▼



NO PAIN, NO GAIN!

If you think your wrestler is something of a wimp, take him along to the gym where those rippling muscles are beefed up still further! Squats, sit-ups and push-ups are three methods of working out and in each the extra power of your wrestler is determined by the amount of joypad battering you can cram into a strict time limit.

▼ *Looks like the referee's been beaten up as well!*







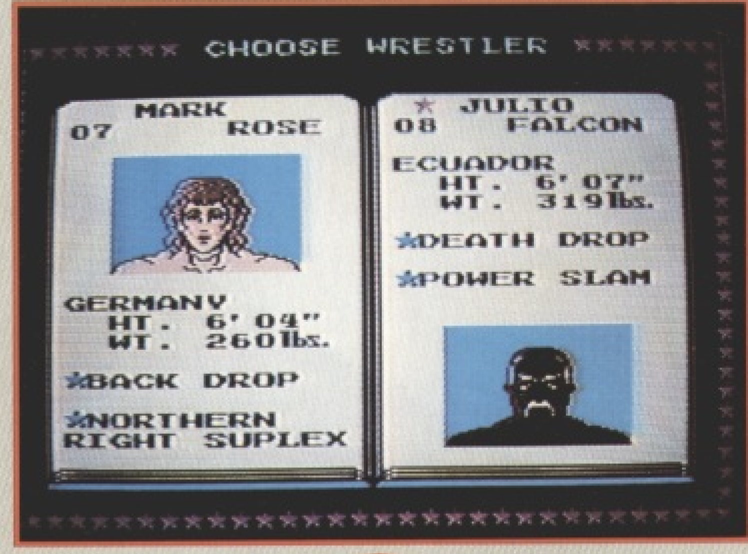
LD ING

COMMENT



JULIAN

I watch WWF Wrestling on Sky telly and think it's a great laugh, and I'm pleased to see that all the fun and action has been captured in this console version of the sport, with each wacky wrestler capable of an incredible variety of moves - some of them are amazing! The commentary that appears under the main screen is a laugh - it's as inane as the real thing! If you're looking at the screenshots, don't be misled. The graphics might look simple when they're static, but it's a different kettle of fish when they're moving - the animation is superb, and there are loads of neat touches like the spanging ropes and clambering back into the ring when you get chucked out! If you're after a thoroughly enjoyable game packed with loads of original features, wrestle this from your software dealer.

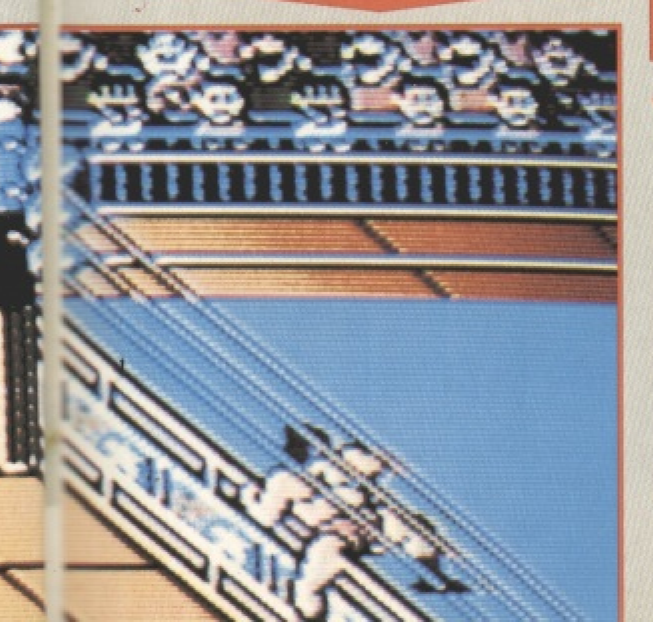


RINGSIDE VIOLENCE

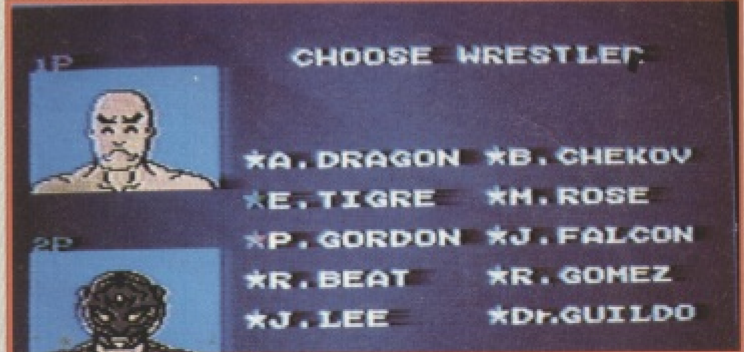
Good wrestlers are always resourceful, making the best use of their surroundings. Such is the case with World Wrestling, where our heroes have the ability to use the whole ring to their advantage. The posts particularly come in handy - not only for crashing your opponent's head against, but also for scaling and launching an airborne attack on your hapless foe! The action can also continue outside of the ring. Why not throw your opponent outside and finish him off with a jolly jumping knee-butt?

GET A GRIP ON YOURSELF

At the beginning of your game, a wrestler is selected. Each has a number of strengths and weaknesses and special attacks. All of the greatest wrestling moves have been crammed into this game, including that old favourite - the piledriver (turn your opponent upside down and slam his head into the canvas!). Other moves include jumping knee-butts (jump into opponent's face with knee extended) and the obligatory clothes line, where an extended arm collides at speed with your opponent's neck!



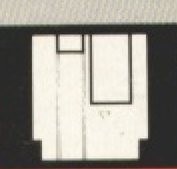
Choose your wrestler for a two player bout!





BY: TECMO
PRICE: £29.99
RELEASE DATE: DEC
GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM
LIVES: N/A
CONTINUES: N/A
SKILL LEVELS: 1
RESPONSIVENESS: FLUID






PRESENTATION 90%

Glitzy wrestling-type presentation screens enhance the atmosphere no end.

GRAPHICS 87%

Amazing sprites with brilliant animation for every move!

SOUND 80%

The tunes are accomplished enough and the effects suit the action.

PLAYABILITY 90%

Instantly playable with so many moves to keep you at the console.

LASTABILITY 83%

The one-player mode is a good laugh, but the two-player mode will have you coming back for more months later.

OVERALL 85%

A brilliant and amazingly playable wrestling game that even surpasses some arcade efforts! Check it out.

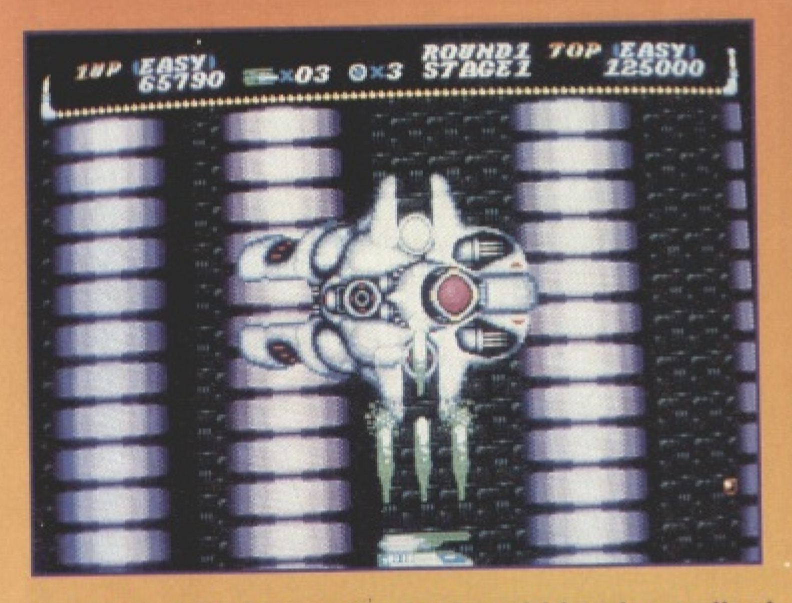
HELLF

Those double-crossing alien slime have gone too far! In a fit of ruthless destruction they've completely taken over six strategically vital, horizontally scrolling sectors of Earth-Space and fortified them to the max. It's down to a real hero to go in and clean up the alien mess.

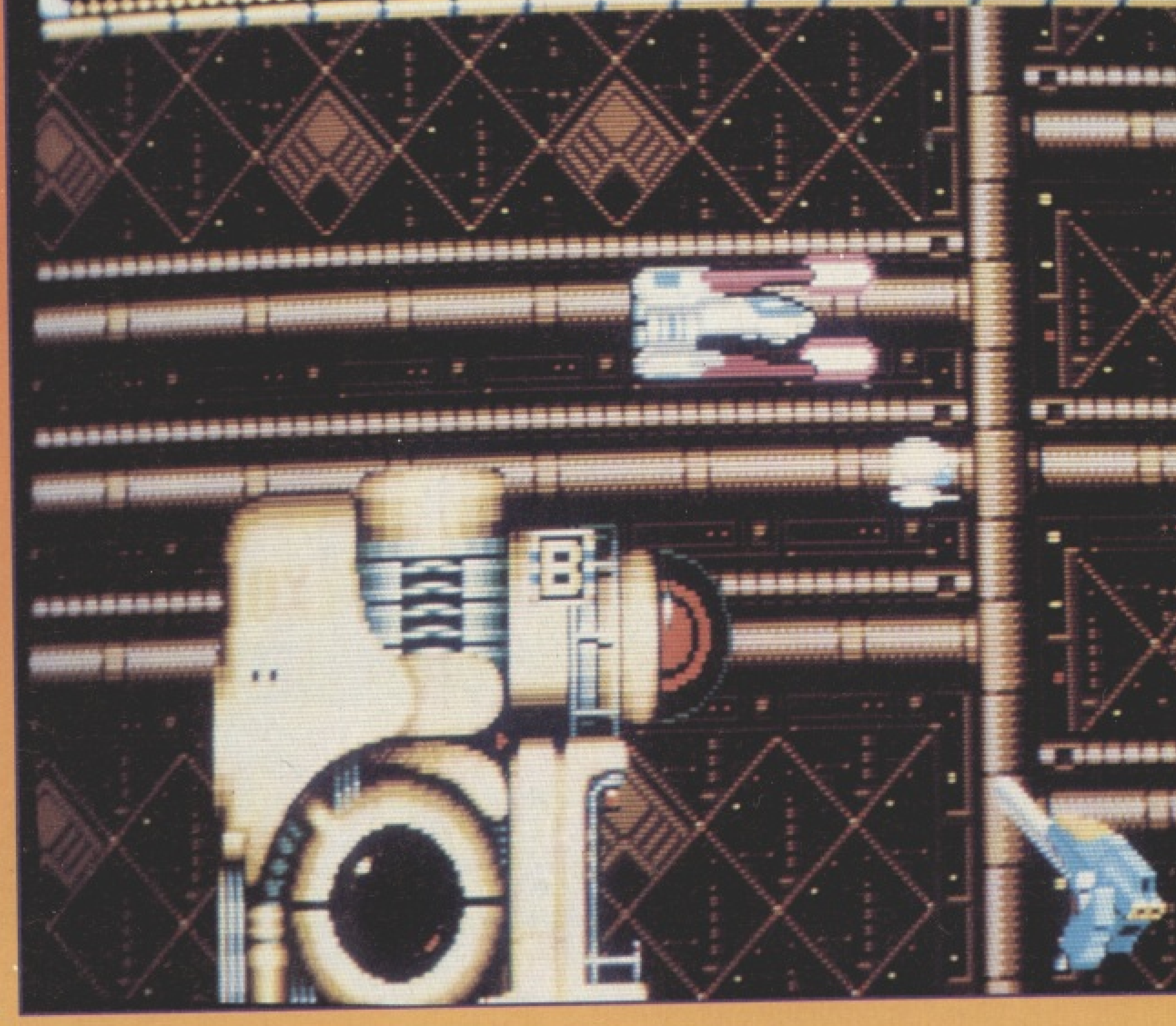
The whole of civilisation needs one man to pilot a Hellfire class attack craft into the danger-zone and meet the whole of the alien fleet in a battle to the last. But these aliens aren't a bunch of thickies. They've drafted in the best battle-cruisers their alien money can buy, and add to that the terrifying legions of swarming alien craft - this isn't going to be easy!

But not everything alien is totally hostile. Certain alien craft are shot to release power-ups that provide Hellfire pilots with the necessary blasting power in order to overcome even the most well-armoured alien battle-craft. But it's not just the enormous enemy fleet that has to be destroyed. Marauding aliens don't hang about, and they've created plenty of nasty installations that are blasted in order to cleanse the sector of all alien occupation - as well as getting a huge amount of points into the bargain.

Even with a huge amount of mega-weaponry at the Hellfire's disposal, the aliens have still got one horrific trump card up their collective sleeve. They've created huge end-of-level guardians with one aim in life - to kill any plucky hero-types who think they can stand up to the alien empire!



▲ *A shielded Hellfire blasts the mid-level guardian!*



▲ *Unbeatable shoot 'em up action with Hellfire.*

▼ *Rear fire picks off any devious aliens.*

COMMENT



MATT

Toaplan's coin-op was simply superb and I'm glad to say that this Megadrive conversion not only captures the amazing graphics, sound and playability of the coin-op - but even adds to it! The music must get a special mention. The game's full of groovy tunes that suit the frenetic blasting action perfectly. Everything about the game is just so polished and feels so good - I defy you not to be addicted by this shoot 'em classic! Hellfire is a flamin' good arcade classic. Put it at the top of your shopping list - NOW!

GREY IMPORT WARNING

At present this is only available from Megadrive software importers and is NOT officially available from Sega in this country. This means that the game will work fine on Megadrives that have been imported from Japan, but will not work on official UK Megadrives unless you have a Japanese games adaptor (available from mail order import companies) or your machine has been modified (which we do not recommend you do as this invalidates your warranty).





FIRE



POWER-UP TO PERFECTION

Across the six sectors of occupied space, Hellfire pilots learn the importance of collecting power-ups. There are a few different kinds of upgrade that can be collected and automatically installed on the Hellfire fighter.




SPEED-UP: Pretty much standard kit on all types of alien-mashing attack craft. Simply makes your craft fly with extra zip.




WEAPONS UPGRADE: In a universe populated with power-hungry alien slime, weapon upgrades can come particularly in handy. Collecting one of these from a fallen foe will endow your Hellfire's lasers with extra power - essential for the later sectors.



SUPER CANNON AMMO: Don't leave home without it. Extra ammunition for your super weapon will always be needed for the Hellfire pilot who is into serious alien carnage.




MULTIPLE: Not available to arcade Hellfire pilots, but included in this version. Doesn't fire as such, but homes in on anything alien and gives it a good kicking. A nice optional extra.



▲ *A fully powered-up front cannon.*



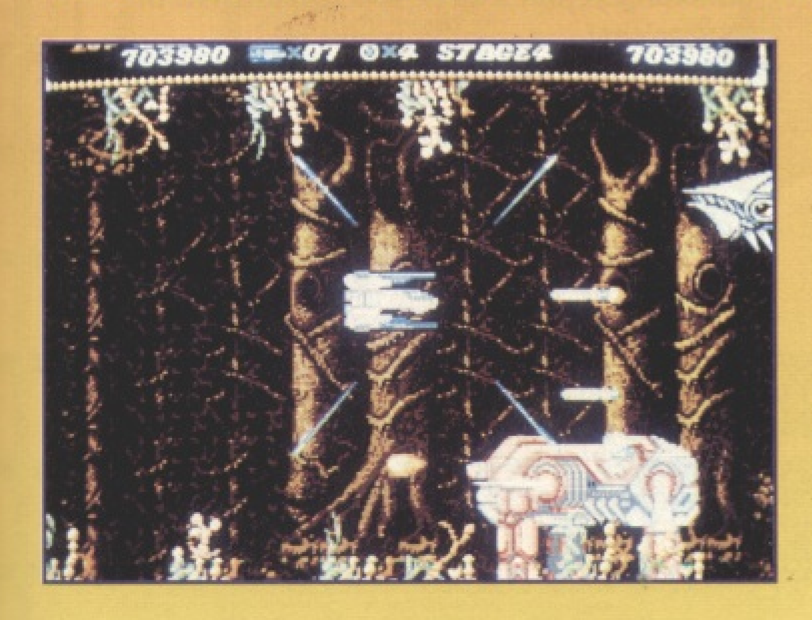
HELLFIRE ARCADE ACTION

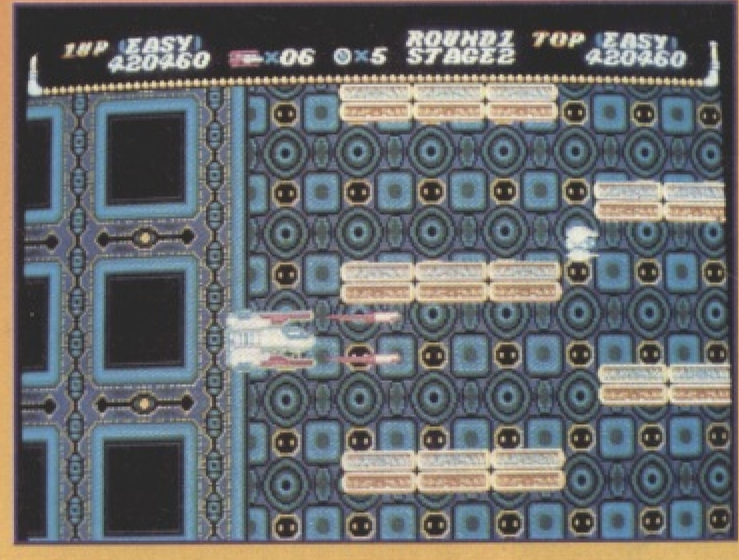
Appearing in arcades last year, Toaplan's Hellfire didn't exactly set the world alight when it was released. Perhaps it was the fact that graphically speaking, it wasn't the most exciting coin-op ever by any stretch of the imagination. But the original gameplay set it apart from the norm, at a time when all that opposing arcade companies could come up with were tepid R-Type/Flying Shark clones. Needless to say, the arcade machine is virtually identical to the game reviewed here. Well worth the occasional 20p if you can find a machine in an arcade near you.

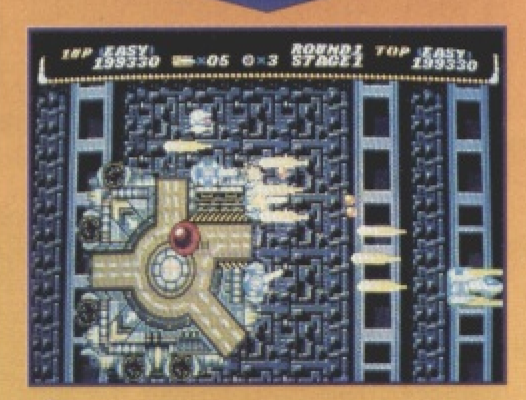


▲ *The diagonal blasting rockets in motion!*

▼ *Diagonal fire helps keep the Hellfire out of trouble!*

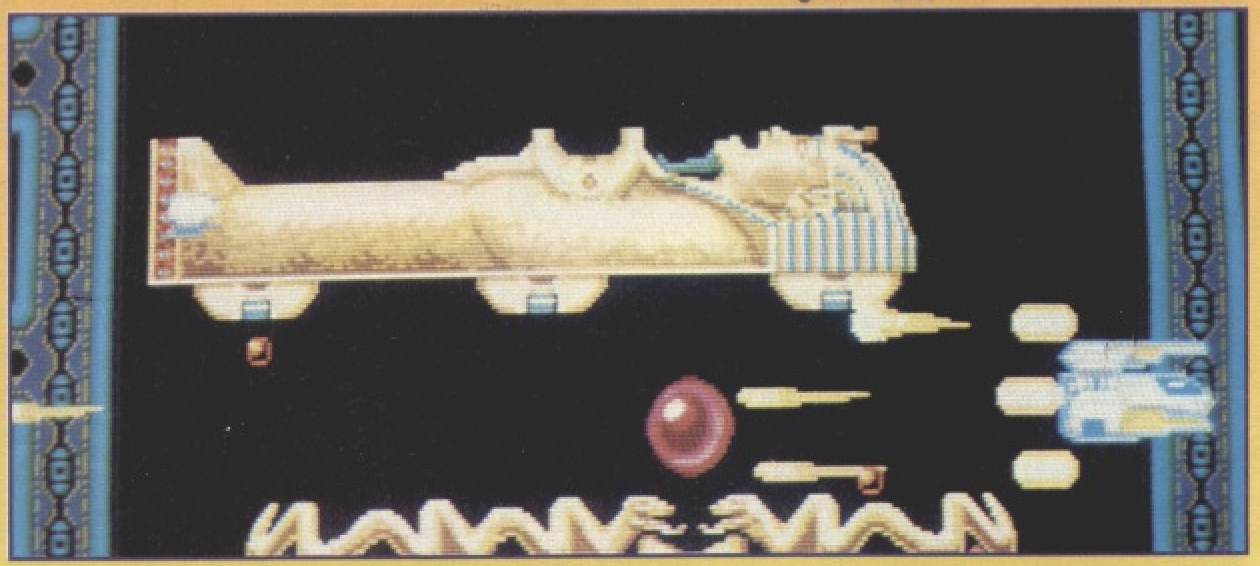






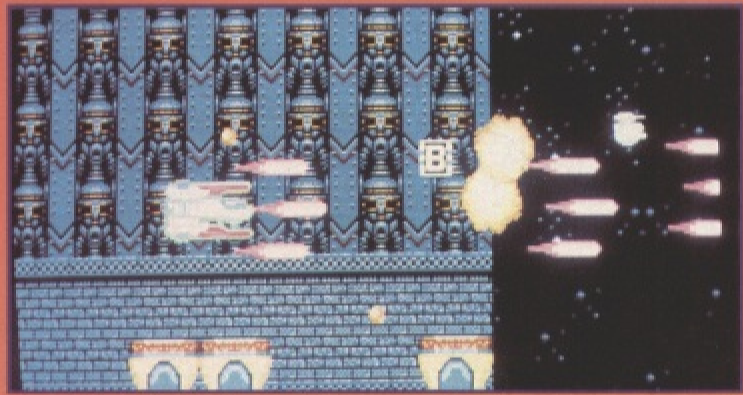
◀ *Diagonal fire helps keep the Hellfire out of trouble!*

▼ *Enter the second end-of-level guardian!*

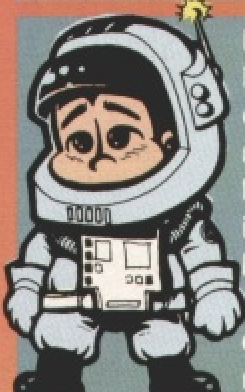




REVIEW



COMMENT



JULIAN

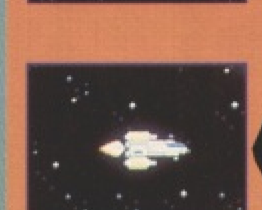
My local arcade has a Hellfire coin-op, and many ten pees have I pumped into it - it's a brilliant blast! And so is this conversion. It's not arcade perfect - in fact, it's arcade better. The graphics and sounds are indistinguishable from the original, but there are more weapons available than in the coin-op and two different difficulty levels! The gameplay is truly superb, and I love the four different modes of firepower. On later levels the baddies attack from all directions, and you have to use them all to survive! If you've got an imported Megadrive and are after a superlative shoot 'em up, this is it!

THE HELLFIRE ARSENAL

Each and every Hellfire class fighter has four modes of firing and a Super Cannon fitted as standard (along with power-steering, central locking and go-faster stripes). Aspiring pilots and all-round Hellfire heroes must learn the good and bad points of each weapon.



FORWARD FIRING: Distinctive red death-dealing photons issue forth from the Hellfire's forward mounted cannon. Essential for the full-frontal (and most probably completely suicidal) attack.



REAR FIRE: Essential kit for the pilot who doesn't particularly enjoy enemy fighters queuing up to blast his butt away from under him.



VERTICAL FIRE: Firing both above and below the Hellfire, these laser cannons are just the biz for wiping out enemy installations without compromising the ship's safety.



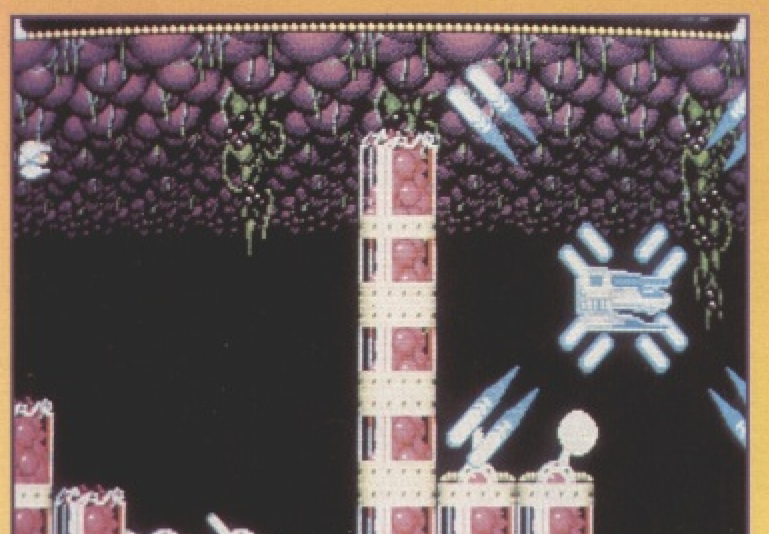
DIAGONAL FIRE: Fires four laser bolts of true death in the four diagonal directions. A good all-round weapon, covering a great deal of space.



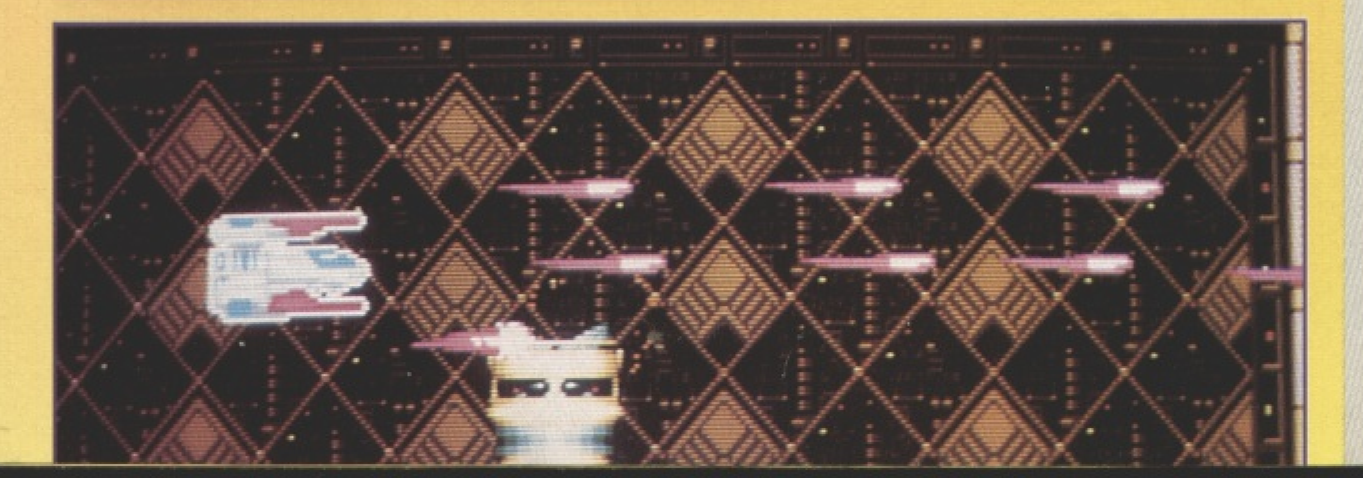
SUPER CANNON: Not available to arcade Hellfire pilots, but included in this version. When the push comes to the shove, and those aliens seem most likely to blast you into your component atoms, one press of the C button releases a terrifying blaze of real Hellfire. Recommended as a last resort weapon only.



▲ There's a whole legion of these to kill!



◀ Destroying enemy installations!



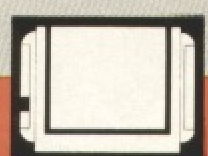
▼ A shielded Hellfire blasts away!

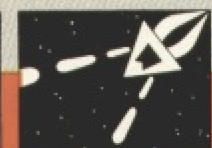
HELLFIRE

© NCS 1990
ORIGINAL GAME
© TOAPLAN Co., Ltd. 1989

BY: TOAPLAN
PRICE: £40.00
RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW
GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM
LIVES: 3
CONTINUES: 9
SKILL LEVELS: 2
RESPONSIVENESS: SUPER

1-2 PLAYERS





PRESENTATION 90%
Lacking in pretty presentation screens, but Hellfire is supremely polished in the gameplay department.

GRAPHICS 92%
A huge variety of beautiful backdrops and sprites battle for the player's attention.

SOUND 95%
Funky tunes suit the atmosphere no end. Brilliant spot effects thrown in for good measure.

PLAYABILITY 94%
The Hellfire is so good to control, and the blasting action's thick and fast and full of surprises!

LASTABILITY 92%
Six tough levels to conquer, and three difficulty levels to sustain interest.

OVERALL 93%
Simply the best shoot 'em up currently available for the Megadrive. Need we say more?

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Batman picks up an extra life for tea.

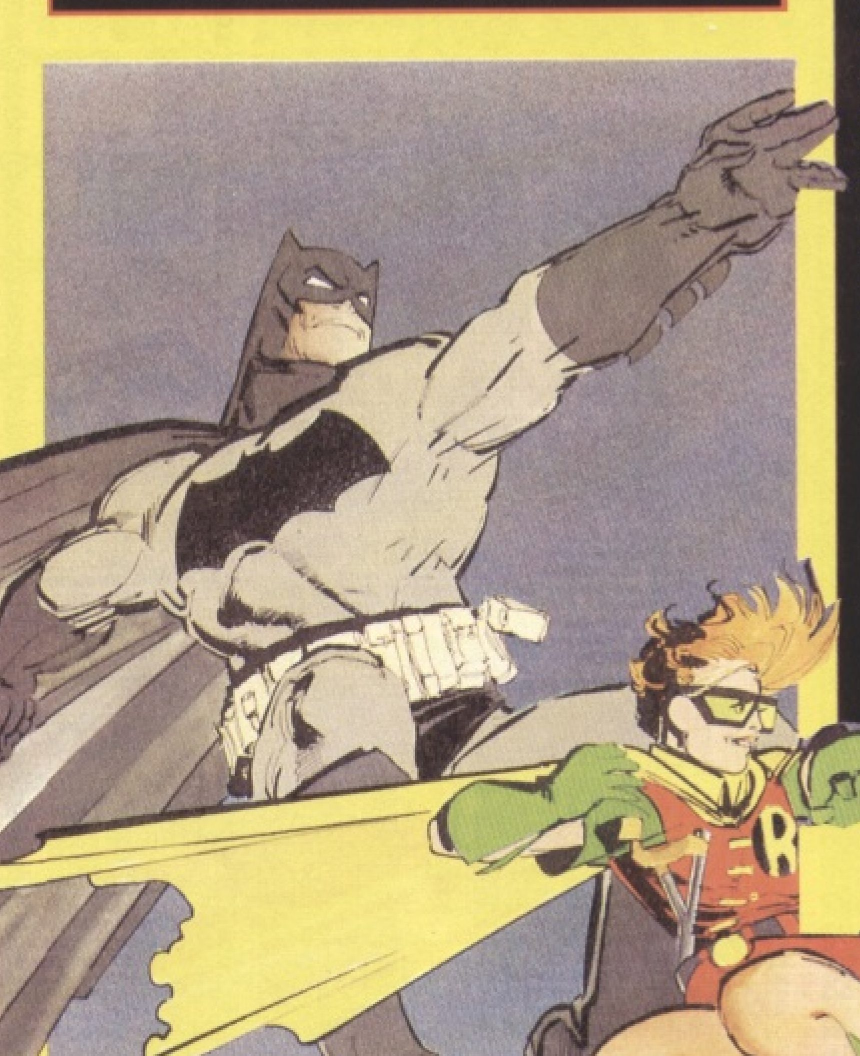


Ever had one of those birthday parties where everything goes wrong? Gotham City's 200th Anniversary Festival has turned out like that. Criminals are in the middle of a spree, and the city is paralysed by violence and mayhem.

Of course someone's masterminding this diabolical scheme - Jack Napier, aka the Joker. It's up to one man (or flying rat, if you prefer) to stop him - Batman. With five stages, each divided into four levels, this is no easy task. There are fifteen types of baddie and five death-dealing end-of-level bosses to be disposed of as the Caped Crusader hacks his way through to the final showdown with the Joker.

Aiding the Batman in his meanderings are numerous power-ups that are scattered around the landscape. These give extra points, more ammunition, or replenish life energy. As Batman can only take eight hits before exploding in a spectacular fashion, more energy is a must. As well as the standard punch the Batman picks up a spear gun, a Batarang, or a Dirk (not Bogarde, but a shurikin thing) along the way. The bosses come in many shapes and sizes; Killer Moth, the Electrocutioner, Firebug and would you believe it a Dual-Container Alarm all try to ruin Dark Knight's day. Die, and the joke's on you...

BATM

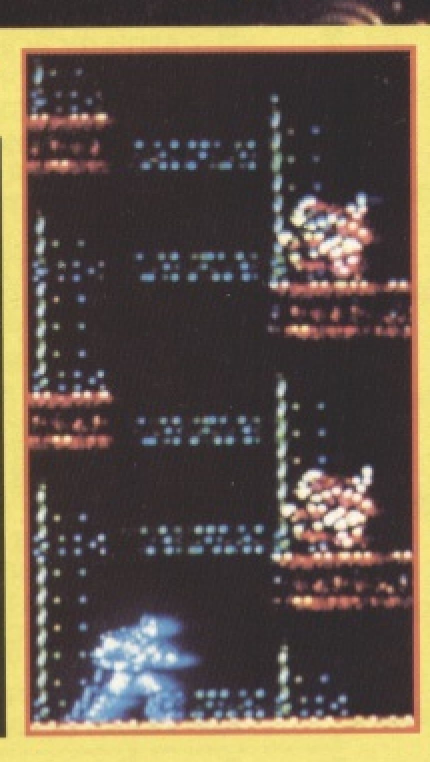


The man himself!

PICTURES (C) TITAN BOOKS

KNIGHT LIFE

The Batman hype explosion can be traced back to one man - Frank Miller. His comics series, The Dark Knight Returns, portrayed the Caped Crusader as a middle-aged man, sick of crime-fighting and retired from vigilante activities. The Joker escapes from a mental hospital and wreaks havoc in Gotham, forcing the antihero out of retirement. Meanwhile the senile President sets off a nuclear holocaust which Superman (the only "government approved" superhero) has to contain. Showing all the worst aspects of human nature, Dark Knight is a laugh from beginning to end - buy it now!

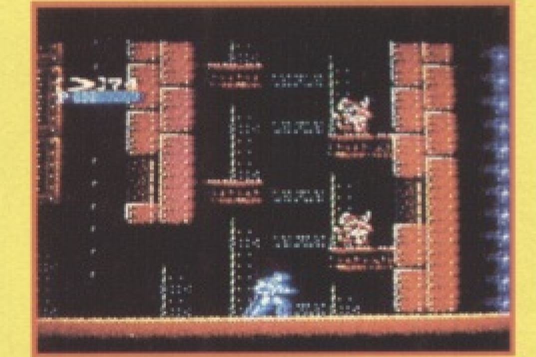


COMMENT

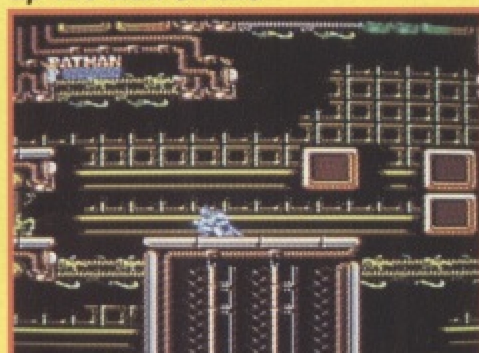


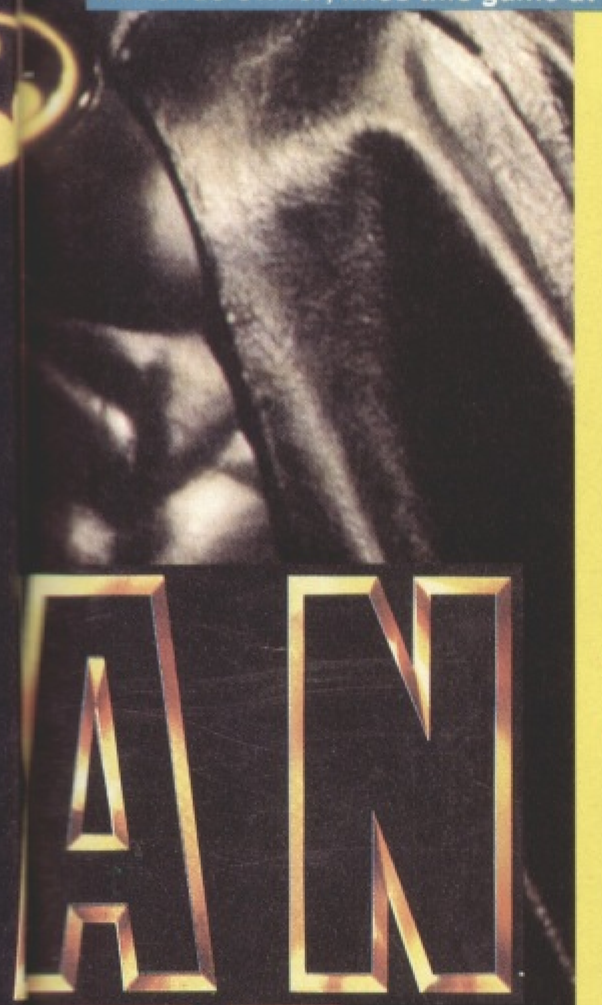
Holy console action! Batman on the Nintendo has turned out to be a real event, with gameplay oozing from every pore (do cartridges have pores?). The graphics are well-defined and rather pretty also; and the array of foes, each with its own form of attack, puts this game way ahead of most NES games being released at the moment. The animated sequences - especially of the Batmobile - left me with my jaw agape they were so good. It's a shame that Batty doesn't have Batarangs from the word go, and has to rely on his fists, but that's just the psychopath in me coming out. For once, the TV advertising has some real muscle behind it, and if you are a Nintendo owner, miss this game at your peril.

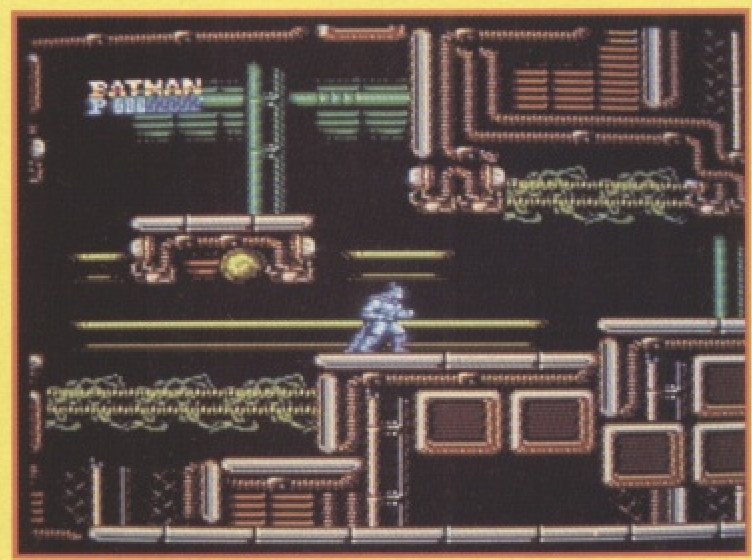
MATT



This way's dangerous - go up the wall on the







Mind the electric field above you.



COMMENT

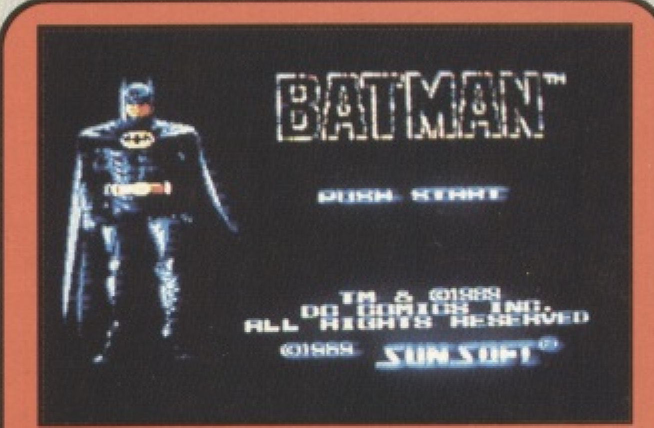


Sporting an extra chip which enhances the graphics, Batman is a visual treat. The backgrounds are sombre-looking, but give the game a dark and brooding atmosphere so prevalent in the film. And it's not just a pretty face. The gameplay is platform-based, with loads of baddies to kapow and extra weapons to collect. There are 20 levels to beat, but the difficulty level is very nicely balanced and the gameplay is addictive enough to keep you coming back time and time again. Batman is expensive, but it's a first class cart that's deserving of any Nintendo owner's collection.

JULIAN

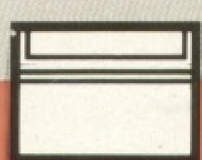
NO MORE MR NICE GUY

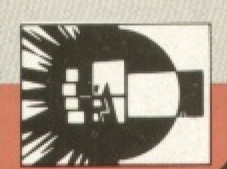
The baddies come thick and fast from the very first level: and they've all got silly names! Shakedowns simply run at the hero and are easily zapped; Heatwaves use nasty flamethrowers in an attempt to barbecue the Batman, whereas Enforcers fly in on jetpacks. Later on Jader jumps up and down on our hero while Nightslayer nails him to the floor!



BY: SUNSOFT
PRICE: £39.99
RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW
GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM
LIVES: 3
CONTINUES: 3
SKILL LEVELS: 1
RESPONSIVENESS: GOOD







PRESENTATION 90%
Brilliant throughout, with slinky animated sequences between levels. Wow!

GRAPHICS 84%
Clear, crispy and succulent. And doesn't melt in your hand!

SOUND 78%
The only let-down in the game. Not awful, but fails to live up to the high standards of the rest of the game.

PLAYABILITY 85%
Eminently playable in every respect. One snort and you're an addict!

LASTABILITY 83%
Twenty sub-levels in all makes this a meaty product with longevity built in. The fun will keep you coming back too.

OVERALL 87%
A classy licence through and through. If you own an NES you'd be bats to miss this - so there!



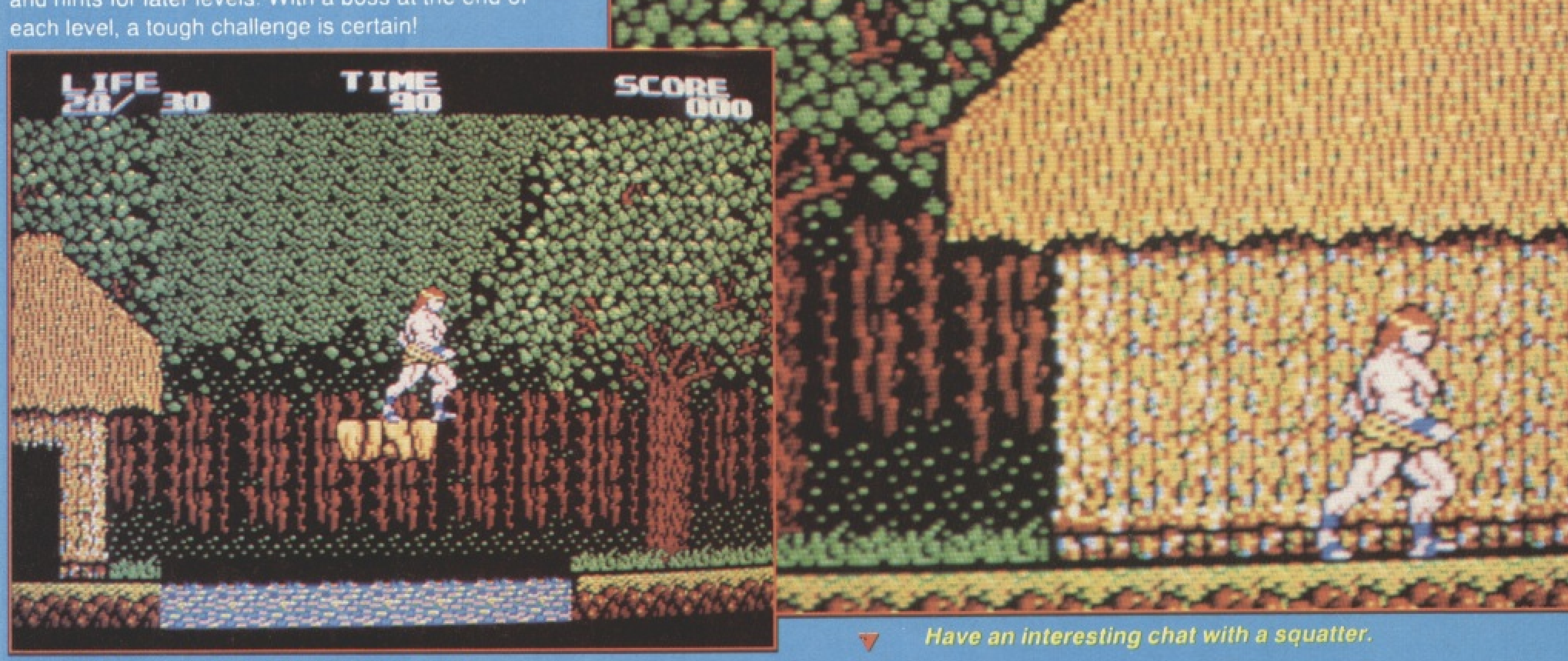
THE JUNGLE F

Feeling alone is something that happens to most people at some stage in their life. But for Danan, who lost all his friends and family when their craft collided rather terminally with the ground of a strange planet, this isn't your usual run-of-the-mill case. Raised by a local called Jimba, Danan came home one day to find Jimba duffed up so badly by the local baddie Gilbas the Demon he was nearly dead. So he went out to see Niai, a holy man (or hippy as they're sometimes known), and collect three sacred objects on the way.

Danan is a horizontally scrolling arcade adventure in which the hero travels through Amazon-style jungles, villages, a battleship, and a temple, in his quest to gather the three objects and defeat the demon Gilbas.

He can jump, crouch, and whip his chopper out and wave it menacingly at the enemies as he explores the landscapes, entering buildings and underground passages. Tokens are there for the taking, adding time, life points, magic, and experience points.

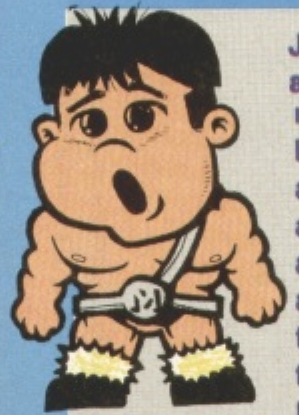
Talking to characters in the game provides clues and hints for later levels. With a boss at the end of each level, a tough challenge is certain!



▲ *Platform climbing romps all the way!*

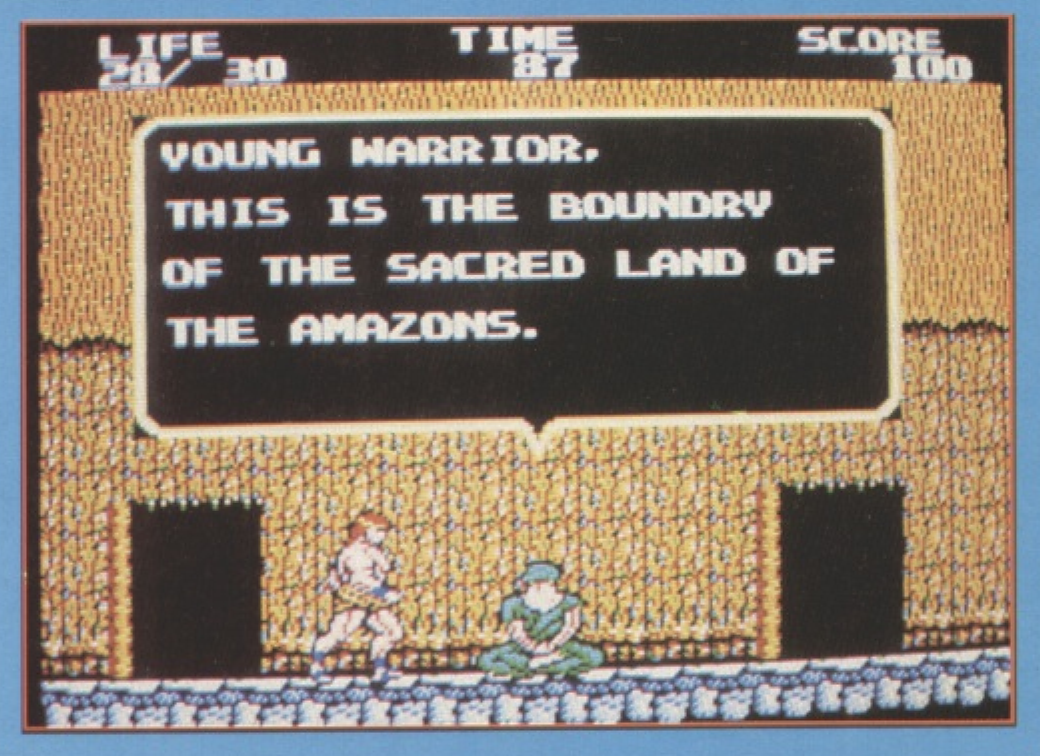
▼ *Have an interesting chat with a squatter.*

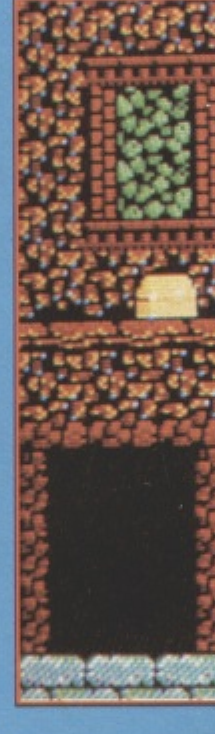
COMMENT

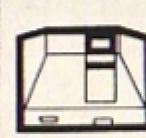


MATT

Jungle Fighter follows the classic arcade adventure path, but with no really original features. There's a lot to the game, and the graphics are attractive and reasonably animated - the tokens especially add to the gameplay. But at the and of the day, Danan doesn't grab the imagination - we've all seen this too many times before. The backgrounds are monotonous and the game's far too easy to provide excitement and a challenge. Still, it's worth a play if this is your cup of tea: if it isn't, try waiting for something with a little more oomph!








GHTER



▼ Careful timing on the ladder is needed to get past the bimbo.

GRAB YOUR BITS

There are tokens aplenty throughout the game, and while every one is worth snapping up, they are all guarded by nasties. Here's the list...

OXYGEN: Gives Danan longer in the underwater scenes.
MEAT: Restores vitality.
CLOCK: Adds time.
STARS: Provide experience points.
ARMADILLO: Smart bomb.





▲ Danan forms a close, loving relationship with the ladder.

COMMENT

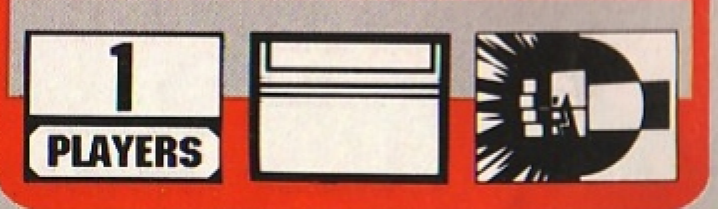


JULIAN

Similar in style to Rastan, but with more levels and a "talk to characters" option, Jungle Fighter is an enjoyable and straightforward horizontally scrolling hack 'n' slash game. There are a few niggling points, though. The landscapes are large, but the gameplay is a little bit tedious, since Danan can only do a few moves, and although the baddies are numerous, they're not particularly tough, allowing you to get quite far into the game very quickly. If you're a Rastan fan, give Jungle Fighter a go - but don't expect it to challenge you for long.



PRICE: £29.99
RELEASE DATE: JAN
GAME DIFFICULTY: EASY
LIVES: 3
CONTINUES: 0
SKILL LEVELS: 1
RESPONSIVENESS: FINE



PRESENTATION 81%
Reasonable loading screen, and the conversations with characters are well presented.

GRAPHICS 72%
Pretty, if samey graphics, but the scrolling can be jerky and some of the sprites aren't particularly lifelike.

SOUND 59%
Very boring aurally, with bog-standard sound effects and tunes.

PLAYABILITY 78%
Interesting to explore, and the straightforward gameplay means it's simple to get into.

LASTABILITY 62%
Although the number of levels means there's a lot of game in there, there's not a lot of variety in the actual gameplay.

OVERALL 72%
A worthy effort marred by lack of variety and poor animation.

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GAM ROU

Constantly striving to bring you the latest in console coverage, MEAN MACHINES gives you a look at the latest Game Boy cartridges. Heck!

PAPERBOY

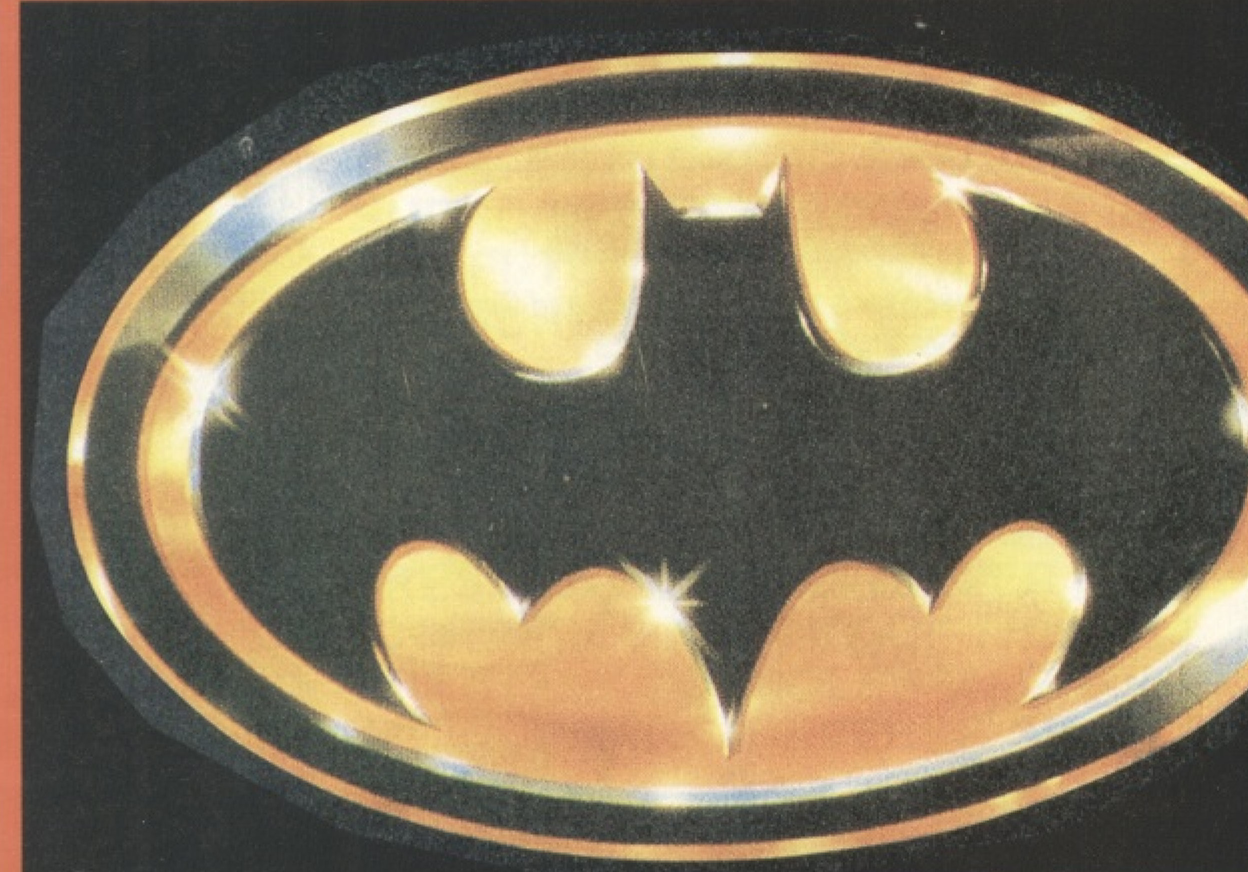
Riding a bike in America's heartland isn't as easy as it sounds. In fact it's downright lethal: dogs, burglars, cars and, would you believe it, ghosts conspire to make your delivery route as hazardous as possible. But the papers have to get through to the subscribers, and this version of the coin-op contains all the features of the original. Steer your bike past the hazards to avoid the sack!

Bonus points can be gained by smashing the windows of non-subscribers, and extra bales of tabloids are scattered around to help the unfortunate delivery boy. So don't freewheel, but pedal your heart out in this suburban epic!

PRESENTATION	79%
GRAPHICS	73%
SOUND	75%
PLAYABILITY	74%
LASTABILITY	56%
OVERALL	67%

MATT: I can't say I thought this game is much cop. The original was buckets of fun, and the Master System version (see MEAN MACHINES issue 1) is excellent. But it really doesn't work on this fo[illegible]at - it needs colourful graphics, and the Gameb[illegible], bless its little heart, just can't deliver that.
JAZ: I don't like this - it's far too fiddly. You need to get your eyeballs out on stalks to work out who are subscribers and who aren't, especially with the ultra-blurry scrolling. Couple that with the rubbish bike controls and you've got a game that soon loses its appeal - even coin-op fans will be disappointed.





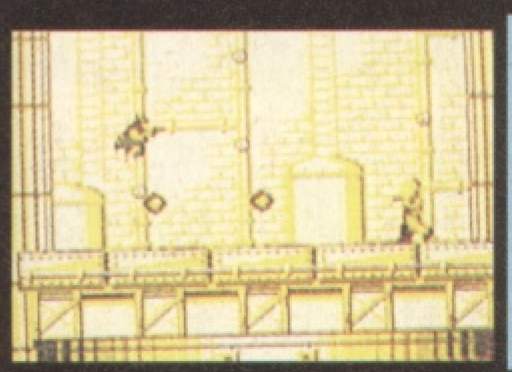
BATMAN

The caped crusader appears on the console scene once again, but in a totally different form from his previous incarnations.

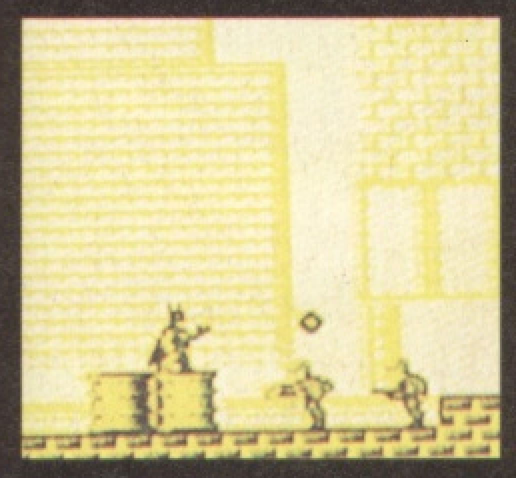
This game is reminiscent of Super Marioland, as Batman jumps and shoots his way through the platform world. Along the way our nocturnal friend is molested by thugs, robots, and the Joker himself. There's even a Batwing section in which the Dark Knight shoots down 'copters. Don't forget to grab all the power-ups you can - you'll need them!



EBOY
ND-UP



PRESENTATION	83%
GRAPHICS	85%
SOUND	88%
PLAYABILITY	92%
LASTABILITY	80%
OVERALL	85%

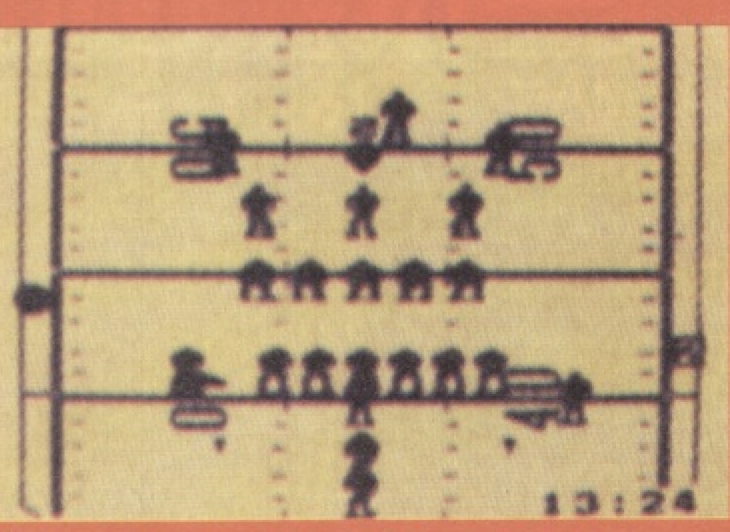


MATT: Another great Gameboy platform game, with a real sense of humour - the main sprite is hilarious! Not only that, but the play is superb; the locations all have a distinctive look, and the array of tokens to be collected makes for difficult decisions - so much the better!

JAZ: I like this a lot - it's sort of Super Marioland with guns! Marioland and Batman are very similar in appearance, but there's more variety in this. The graphics are excellent, and the gameplay is both challenging and addictive, and there are plenty of different weapons to try out. Highly recommended.







NFL FOOTBALL

Sixteen! Forty eight! Hut! The gridiron comes to the Gameboy together with all its interruptions and complicated rules. Play the computer - or a friend with the Game Link - and choose any of the NFL teams that grab your fancy.

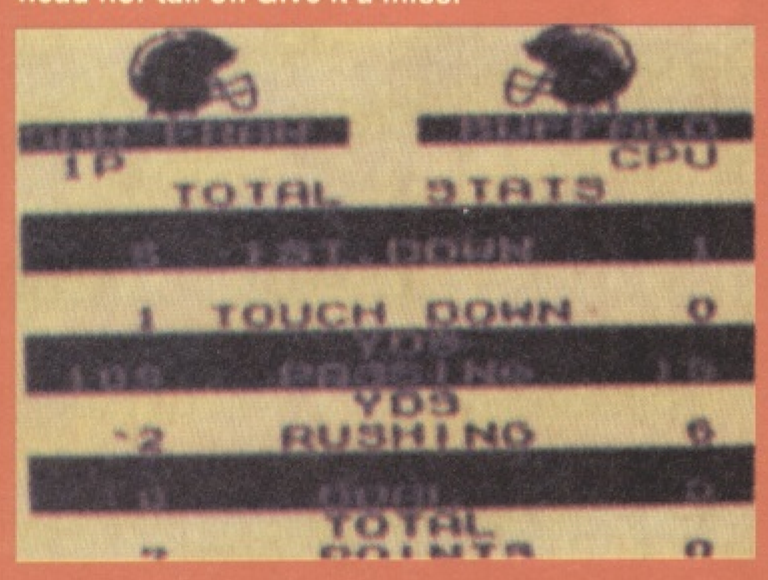
After kick off, the running back has to get as far upfield as possible until the opposition knocks him down. Then offensive plays are chosen in an attempt to gain 10 yards in four plays, which isn't as easy as it sounds. Alternatively while on defense, the task in hand is to prevent the other team from making their first down - and so regain possession. Punts and field goals are also available.

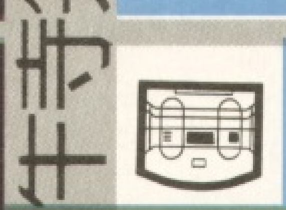
Big helmets, shoulder pads, and enormous salaries - it may sound like Dallas, but it's American Football!

PRESENTATION	71%
GRAPHICS	44%
SOUND	60%
PLAYABILITY	51%
LASTABILITY	32%
OVERALL	43%

MATT: A game this complex needs clear, straightforward graphics, not dozens of minute stick men lethargically wandering around the pitch. The potential's there, but the game fails to complete the play!

JAZ: Oh dear. When you look at the screen shots, this looks great. But once you see the crippled outcasts from a Lowry painting blurring their way around the screen like slugs you soon get put off. And when the action gets hectic, you end up with a writhing mass of pixels which you can't make head nor tail of. Give it a miss.

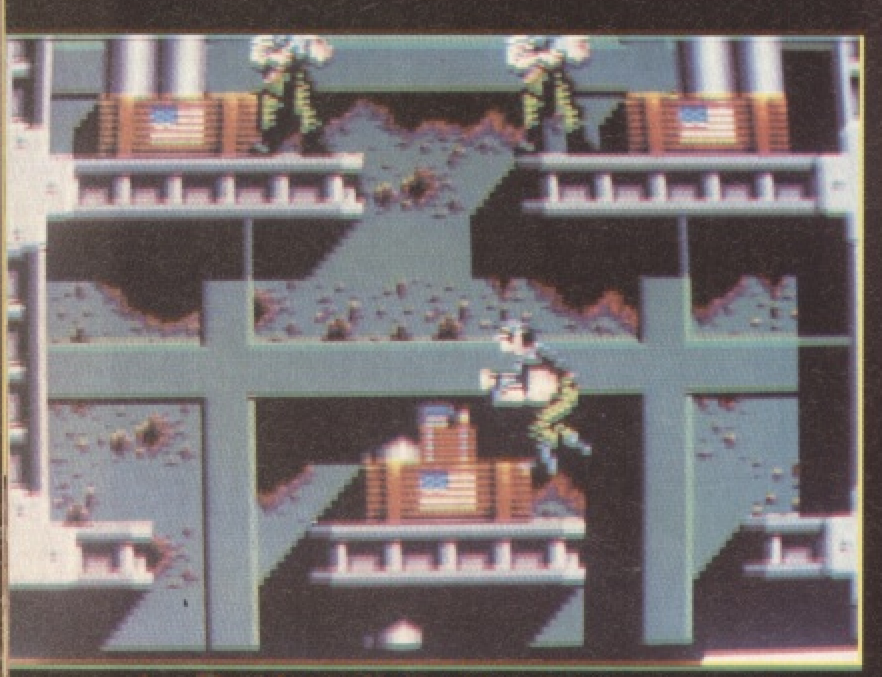




Nope, not a game about paramilitary sea mammals clapping and catching fish, the Navy SEALS are the US Navy's equivalent to our SAS - and they don't even smoke Embassies. Based on the Charlie Sheen film (yet to be released in the UK), the game involves a team of SEALS infiltrating a Middle Eastern country to rescue hostages, killing, maiming, and blowing things up on the way.

The action takes place over six levels, each based in an exotic location, such as a harbour, barracks, and a radio tower. Each team member can jump, somersault on to platforms, crouch and crawl - as well as shoot, of course. The idea is to travel through the level, planting bombs and splattering Johnny Arab Terrorist all over the landscape within the tough time limit. Eight lives are all you get, and the time isn't reset when a SEAL dies, so there's no hanging around!

Luckily power-ups are liberally dispersed through the levels, usually in the form of weapon upgrades including machine guns and flame throwers. Not an easy game, lots of effort is required to free the hostages for truth, justice, and the American way!



▲ *The places to plant bombs are cunningly disguised with American flags.*

COMMENT



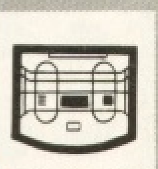
MATT

Whoops! Guess who's made their game too difficult? There's no problem with a hard-to-beat game, but this Ocean offering's just plain awkward to play. That's a shame, as there's a good game in there struggling to get out; and after the poor showing of Robocop II, I was hoping this would be the platform game to buy for the Amstrad. Still, it has its redeeming features; the animation of the hero swinging onto an overhead platform is superb, and it has that "just one more try" quality - although sometimes frustration makes you want to get the cartridge and bung it out of the window. If you're not the most patient of players, think twice before buying.

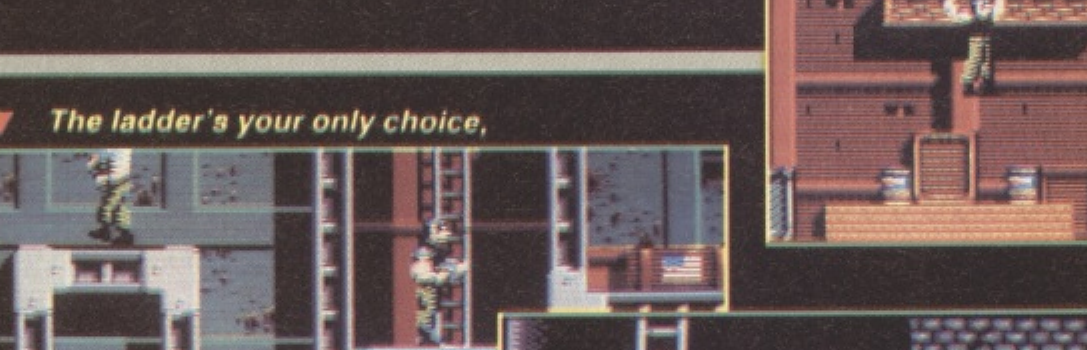


SEALED WITH A KILL

The Navy SEALS movie stars Charlie Sheen, best known for his performances in Platoon and Wall Street, and Michael Beihn, remembered as Reece in Terminator. The plot concerns a Navy helicopter that is shot down while on a jaunt through Beirut. The SEALS are sent to rescue their compatriots, and when they discover that the baddies have got their mitts on some nasty weapons (I wonder who sold the missiles to them?), they decide to annihilate the terrorists and escape. Unfortunately, the film hasn't been released yet in Britain - but it's expected to appear sometime in early next year.

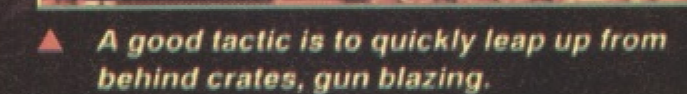


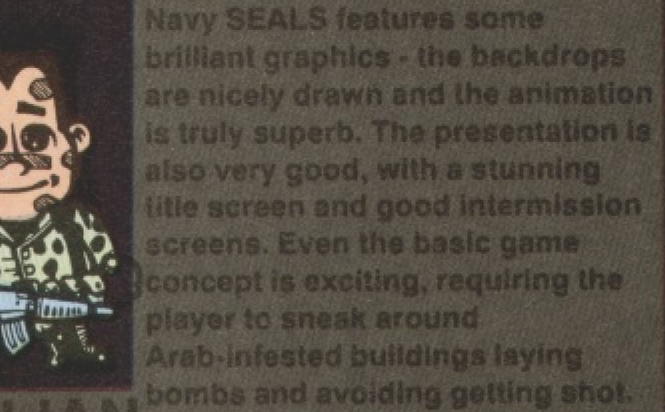




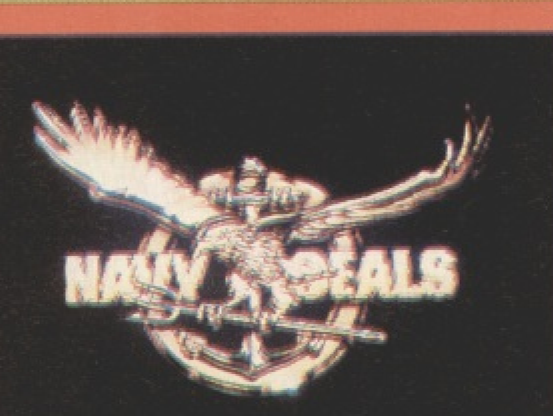
The ladder's your only choice,





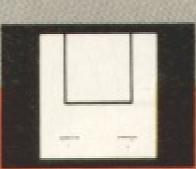


A good tactic is to quickly leap up from behind crates, gun blazing.



BY: OCEAN
PRICE: £24.99
RELEASE DATE: DEC
GAME DIFFICULTY: HARD
LIVES: 8
CONTINUES: 0
SKILL LEVELS: 1
RESPONSIVENESS: SLOW



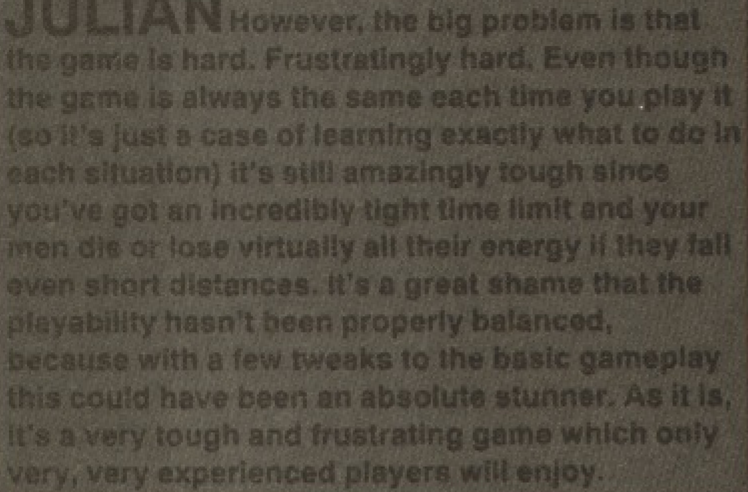


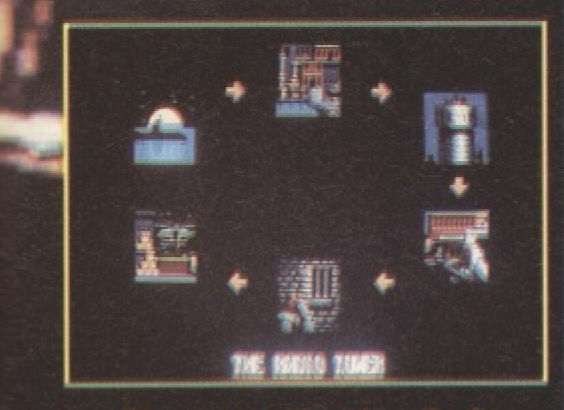


COMMENT

JULIAN

Navy SEALS features some brilliant graphics - the backdrops are nicely drawn and the animation is truly superb. The presentation is also very good, with a stunning title screen and good intermission screens. Even the basic game concept is exciting, requiring the player to sneak around Arab-infested buildings laying bombs and avoiding getting shot. However, the big problem is that the game is hard. Frustratingly hard. Even though the game is always the same each time you play it (so it's just a case of learning exactly what to do in each situation) it's still amazingly tough since you've got an incredibly tight time limit and your men die or lose virtually all their energy if they fall even short distances. It's a great shame that the playability hasn't been properly balanced, because with a few tweaks to the basic gameplay this could have been an absolute stunner. As it is, it's a very tough and frustrating game which only very, very experienced players will enjoy.





The second level - a Radio Tower.

PRESENTATION 80%

An opening screen displays all the levels, and the layout of the game is strong throughout.

GRAPHICS 82%

The main sprites are all are cleverly animated, and the backgrounds are atmospheric.

SOUND 76%

Rather unimpressive effects. The intro music is jolly, however, and adds atmosphere.

PLAYABILITY 71%

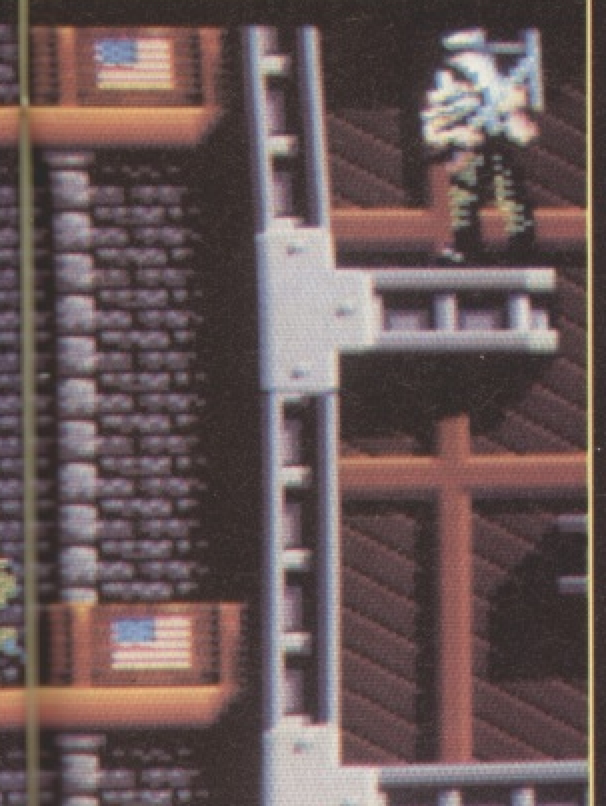
The main sprite moves in a lethargic way, and the difficulty level makes it very hard to progress.

LASTABILITY 77%

The game's big and tough, but the massive frustration level might mean you'll give up long before you reach the end.

OVERALL 76%

A brilliant-looking game which has plenty going for it, but is marred by frustratingly hard gameplay.





Back on the chain gang!

A SEAL's flamethrower cuts swathes through the enemy.

SEGA CHRIMBLE COMP!



It's Christmas, if you hadn't noticed, and those lovely people at Virgin/Mastertronic have gone completely and utterly bonkers and are literally throwing away prizes in this extra special Chrimble comp.

First prize in this super prize jamboree is a Sega Megadrive, which comes complete with joypad, power supply and a copy of Altered Beast. Hurrah!

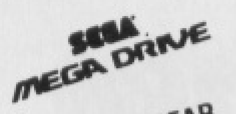
There's also a pair of second prizes in the form of Sega Master Systems. Double hurrah, with a side salad and extra mushrooms.

So what do you have to do to win one of these slendiferous prizes? We-e-ell. Since it's Christmas, and you've got loads of time on your hands, we want you to draw us a map of your favourite game. Obviously, the better and more complicated the map, the more chance you have of winning one of those lovely prizes! So get your special drawing trousers on, get playing your favourite game and make a map!

The winning maps will be published in a future edition of MEAN MACHINES, so not only will the winners get a fab prize, they'll also get all the fame and fortune of having their work published in this mega mag!

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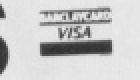
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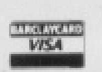
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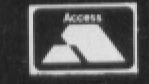
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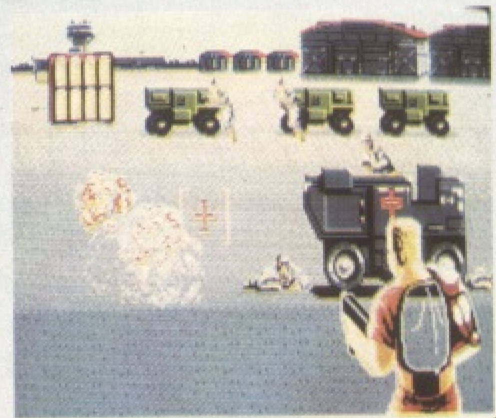


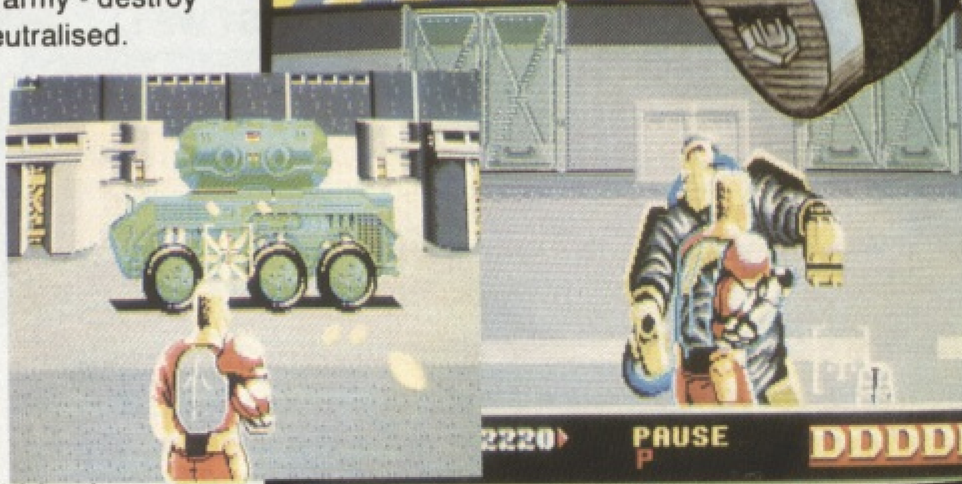
It's the year 2089 and the ozone layer is being destroyed by human excess - just like it is today. The World's Presidents get together and agree to do research into making cyber human beings, normal humans with special skins immune to the deadly ultraviolet waves. However, one of the Presidents steals the plans and makes an army of superhumans with the intent of taking over the world.

The rest of the world retaliates with a plan codenamed Dynamite - a superhuman cyborg called Colonel Duke who's armed with a machine gun and a bionic arm and capable of taking on the army and destroying them single-handedly!

The action is displayed in first-person perspective 3D, and is played over six different levels, with Duke shooting and punching his way through hordes of marauding baddies. At the end of the last level is the evil President who controls the enemy army - destroy him and the threat to world peace is neutralised.





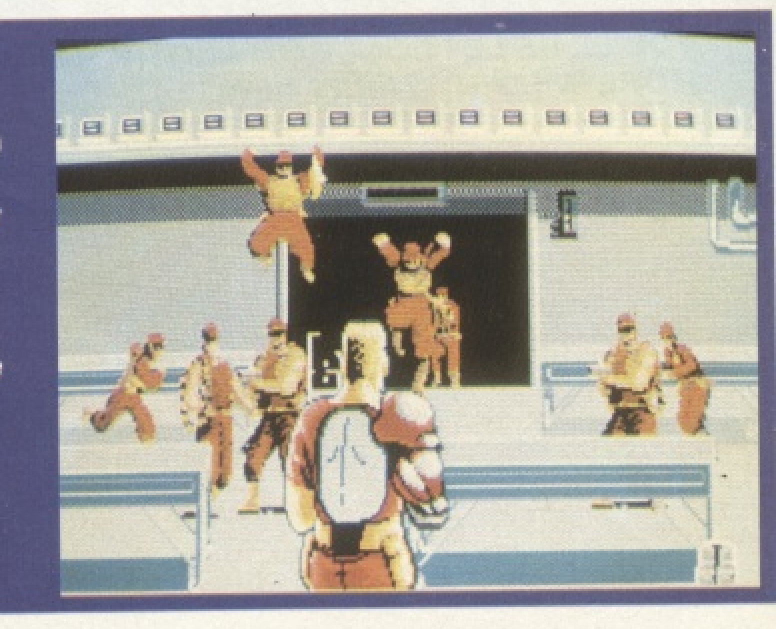


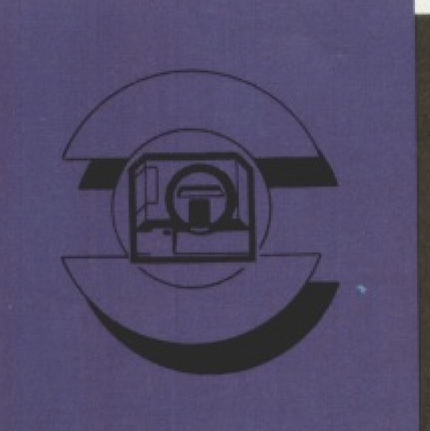
▲ *Destroy the scenery to reveal hidden bonus items.*



TRIPLE DUKE

Three versions of Seibu's Dynamite Duke appeared in the arcades. The original Duke was released in September 1988, and was followed three months later by a revised version of the game which featured different weapons and tweaked gameplay. A third version called Double Dynamite was released four months after that, featuring the same gameplay as the second game, but with a simultaneous two-player option.







PUNCH DRUNK

Duke is capable of doing a super dynamite punch. Just keep the fire button depressed until the power meter reaches its maximum and then let go to unleash a mega punch which destroys virtually anything!

▲ *Duke's in deep trouble, so it's time for....*

▲ *....a Dynamite punch to blow away the fiend!*

▲ *Avoid the clones and aim at the android*

BY: SEGA

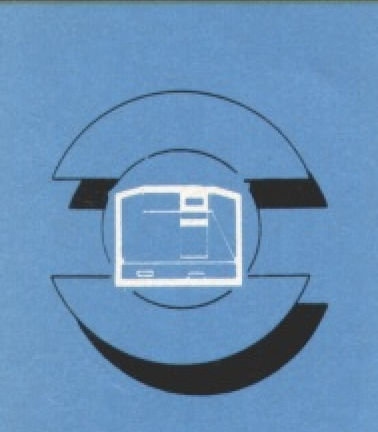
PRICE: TBA

RELEASE DATE: TBA
GAME DIFFICULTY: EASY
LIVES: 1
CONTINUES: 2
SKILL LEVELS: 3
RESPONSIVENESS: GOOD

1 PLAYERS

PREVIEW



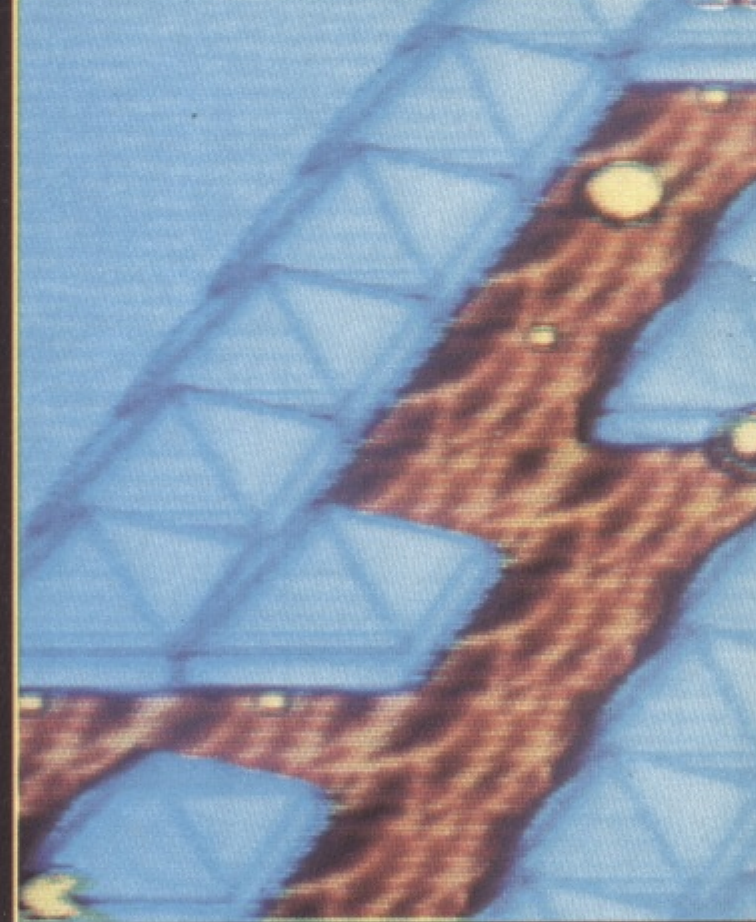


PacMan, perhaps the most famous arcade -character of all time, is back - and this time he's brought his Dad. Well, no, he hasn't really, but this Master System version of the coin-op includes all the features of the original, plus some extra crunchy bits especially for you (as a certain crappy Oz singer would say).

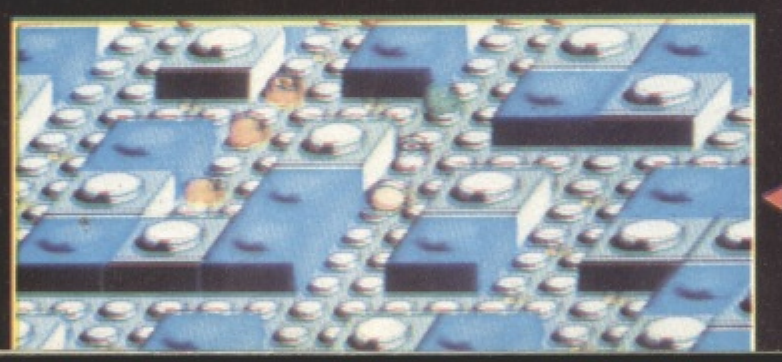
Featuring all four of the original levels - Block Town, PacMan's Park, Sandbox Land, and Jungley Steps - this forced-perspective 3D game stars everyone's favourite happy yellow blob collecting dots that are scattered around the landscape.

Of course things are never that simple. Pursuing PacMan are a number of ghosts, all bent on bringing about his demise. Some ghosts track him by his trail, others by working out where he is at present. Luckily our hero can jump, and neatly evade the nasties - if the hand on the joypad is quick enough!

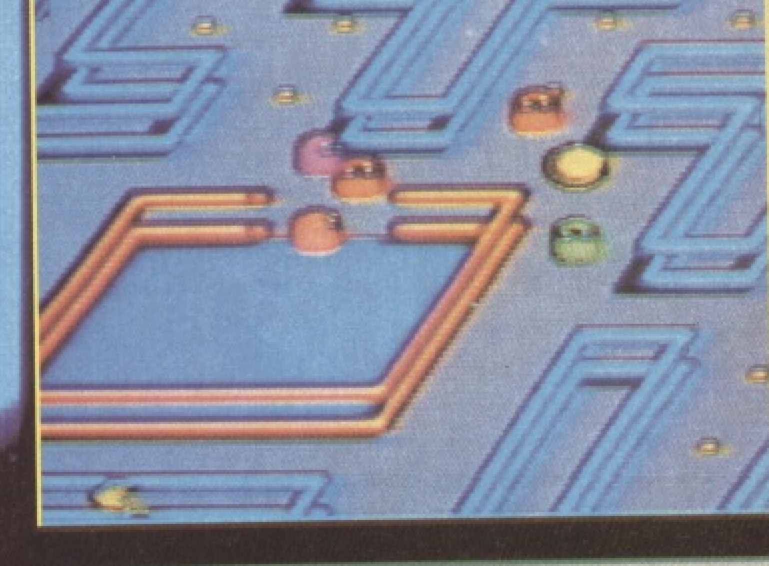
From what we've seen so far, Pacmania is shaping up to be one if the hottest Master System games in a long while. Look out for a full review early next year.



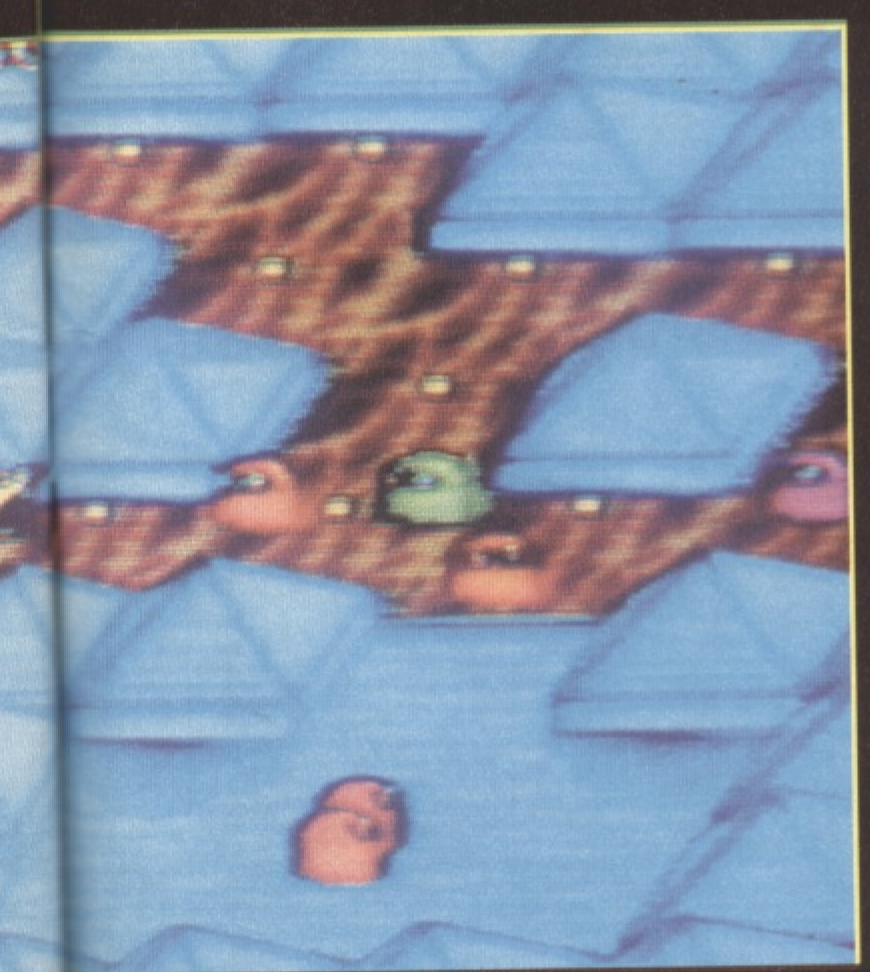
Block Town in all its glory!







▼ *Looks like our hero's in a bit of a tight spot.*



▲ *PacMan's in trouble during his travels in Sandbox Land.*



PAC MANIA

Launched in 1982, Namco's PacMan coin-op was a phenomenal success - machines popping up everywhere from arcades to shops! Its simple, non-violent, brain-teasing gameplay bringing huge numbers of female gamesplayers into arcades for the first time, and traditional arcadesters easily . Spin-off merchandising appeared from all quarters, including PacMan clocks, cuddly toys, sweets, towels, clothes, wallpaper, bed sheets... You name it, it had PacMan on it!

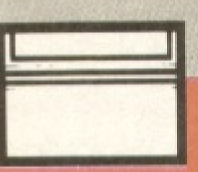


BY: TECMAGIK

PRICE: TBA

RELEASE DATE: FEB
GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM
LIVES: 3
CONTINUES: 0
SKILL LEVELS: 1
RESPONSIVENESS: GREAT







YOB'S GOSSIP

YOB's been sneaking around, digging up the latest rumours and scandals for your delectation! What's been going on this month? Well, read on and see...

I'M A LITTLE PIXIE

A mole at IDG, the company who are responsible for the upcoming Tecmagik Sega titles (I trust it you've already seen the Pacmania preview) has told me the nickname of their PR person, Nicky Hemming. It's none other than "Pixie". Strange, but true.

BUNKING AROUND PARIS

When French software company Titus organised to take a gaggle of Journalists over to see them in Paris, there were many smiles in evidence. However, little did they know what horrors were in store...

First of all, the cab from the airport to the Titus offices cost a meagre £40.00. "Never mind", thought the hacks, "at least the trip back to the hotel for the overnight stay would be straightforward"? Not likely. The assembled press were bundled into the back of the Titus delivery van, because there were no taxis near their offices, and dumped off at the nearest railway station, where the Titus PR person informed them to jump over the barriers without getting a ticket because "very few people get caught". At least one honest journo purchased a ticket...

When the journos finally got to the hotel, expecting a relaxing evening's sleep, they discovered that the broom cupboards posing as bedrooms had been wrongly booked for two couples rather than four individuals, resulting in the journos having to get to know one another rather better than they'd hoped! Oh well...

MASTERMIX VIDEO

The Sega "Do Yourself a Favour" Mastermix that was given away free on the cover of last month's MEAN MACHINES has been so amazingly well received that Virgin/Mastertronic are considering making a video to go with the song! Next stop Top of the Pops and MTV!

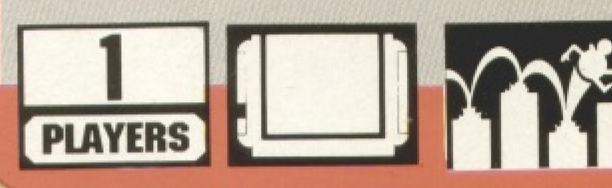
KISS MY SEGA!

If you're a radio listener and regularly tune in to Kiss FM, you'll be interested to hear that all the DJs at the station are completely and utterly mad about Sega! In fact, they're so mad about Sega consoles that they're going to be organising a mega Sega competition. So keep listening - I'll try and find out more about it and bring you a further report.

GAZ REVIEW FOR YOB'S GOSSIP



BY: GARY'S MUM
PRICE: CHEAP
RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW
GAME DIFFICULTY: SIMPLE
LIVES: 1
CONTINUES: 0
SKILL LEVELS: 1
RESPONSIVENESS: SLOW



PRESENTATION 61%
Pretty tatty! An unshaven mush, clothes from Marks 'n' Spencer and trousers with holes in the bottom.

GRAPHICS 99%
Very good actually. Our Gaz can draw like a demon - just check out the cover and pictures in the magazine!

SOUND 57%
Mostly quiet wingeing noises, but occasionally the odd crow when he gets a highscore.

PLAYABILITY 73%
Easy to get into, he's a simple person - just wind him up and watch him go.

LASTABILITY 72%
Not very long, unfortunately.

OVERALL 73%
Excellent graphics let down by poor presentation and slightly ropey sound. Still, shows plenty of promise.



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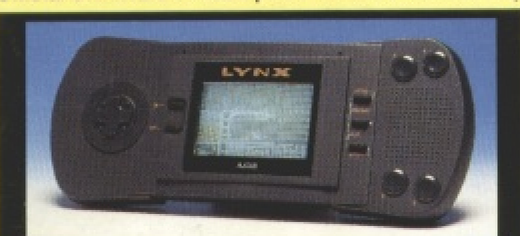
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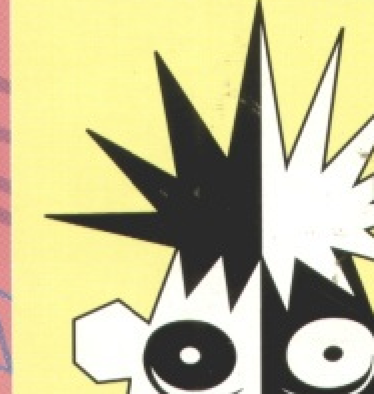


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